CITIZENS OF TOMORROW, TODAY: POLITICAL FUTURITY AND YOUTH CITIZENSHIP IN A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

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Abstract

Student councils are ubiquitous in North American high schools, and yet, they are often overlooked as a site of youth citizenship and student leadership. This dissertation explores the affective dimensions of youth citizenship and student leadership, focusing on a student council in an urban high school in Canada. Based on a 15-month ethnography, the dissertation claims that affective orientations toward politics and young people are often at odds with the developmental and relational realities of being a young person. Through analysis of participant observations, interview transcripts, and texts, the study draws attention to the way that the relationships that structure schooling circumscribe young people's citizenship and leadership. Drawing on theories of affect and political theory, the study focuses on three areas toward which the young people in the study's political lives were oriented: "infantile citizenship" (Berlant, 1997), authority and political conflict, and "happy diversity" (Ahmed, 2012). The dissertation concludes with a call for educators, policy-makers, and scholars interested in childhood and youth to consider the political and affective conditions that propel impulses to improve upon young people's enactment of citizenship in terms of the attachment to the promise of young people's political futurity.

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Introduction: Simcoe Secondary School and the Affective Politics of the Student Council

It was student council election week at Simcoe Secondary School, an inner-city high school on the edges of downtown. The hallways of the stately old school were plastered with home-made posters and banners, their punny slogans, riffs on pop-culture memes, and ragged masking tape contrasting with the cool grandeur of the school's gothic revival architecture, its soaring entrance rotunda, and its curved stone staircases. All week, at lunchtime and after school, the candidates had plied their classmates with cupcakes and candy, hoping to register a positive interaction with a shy grade nine student or, perhaps, a swaggering grade twelve. Students had told me over and over that interactions like these matter, that they'd made them feel important, or at least, less intimidated by a senior student. Some of the candidates in this election identified a fleeting interaction over a cupcake years ago, the soupçon of belonging, as the genesis of their own political ambitions.

The campaign period had been marked by only a few tense moments: close friends running against each other for the same position; a handful of posters defaced, with Xs drawn over smiling faces; rumours of candidates spending more than the forty-dollar campaign limit. The next morning, during first period, the school's 900 students would elect a president, a vice president, a vice president of external affairs, a secretary, a treasurer, and a social convenor by a secret ballot. But first, the nearly twenty candidates would the stage to deliver their final appeals to their classmates. Just before 10 am, the outgoing council and the candidates gathered in the auditorium and took their seats in rows of folding chairs on the stage. They were, with one or two exceptions, finishing grade eleven, looking ahead to their last year of

high school. At a glance, they reflected the school's racial and religious diversity, but the gender balance was skewed: only three of the twenty candidates are boys, and two of them were running for the same position. Serendipitously, the assembly fell on "office day" — a spirit week theme day where students wore business-casual outfits for spirit points. For many of the candidates, nervous miens were amplified by the tug and pull of blazers and pencil skirts.

The auditorium was still largely empty when the candidates took their seats. Quiet and musty, the setting seemed to anticipate the thunderous scene that was about to enfold. The worn theatre, with its sloping floors, heavy balcony, and threadbare jacquard seats seemed to suit the generations-old tradition of the student council election. A sprawling mural, covering all the available wall space in the auditorium, depicts scenes of Canadian history, from Europeans' arrival in North America to the aftermath of World War I. In one image, John Cabot, encircled by settlers and Indigenous people, appears to be engaged in an earnest and noble speech. Figures on the sloping stone foreground sit languidly, gazing upon Cabot; tree trunks and their arching canopies give the impression of the columns and arches of classical architecture (figure 1). In another, depicting a scene from the early 1900s, sombre-faced, white settler workers, children, soldiers, and livestock gather around "Patriotism," symbolized as a classically-styled female figure, who is framed by doric columns and arches (figure 2). Fresco-like, the murals recall high Renaissance paintings depicting Classical ideals: reason, dialogue, consensus, discourse. It was against this backdrop, these scenes of empire, devoted citizenship, and enlightenment that this group of young people — most of them first- or second- generation immigrants — would deliver speeches that reflected their entry into the public world of politics.

As the rest of the students filed into the auditorium, the outgoing council made final arrangements with the sound technicians and the staff student council advisor: these students would introduce the candidates and describe each position; as it turns out, they would also be subject to some pointed jabs.

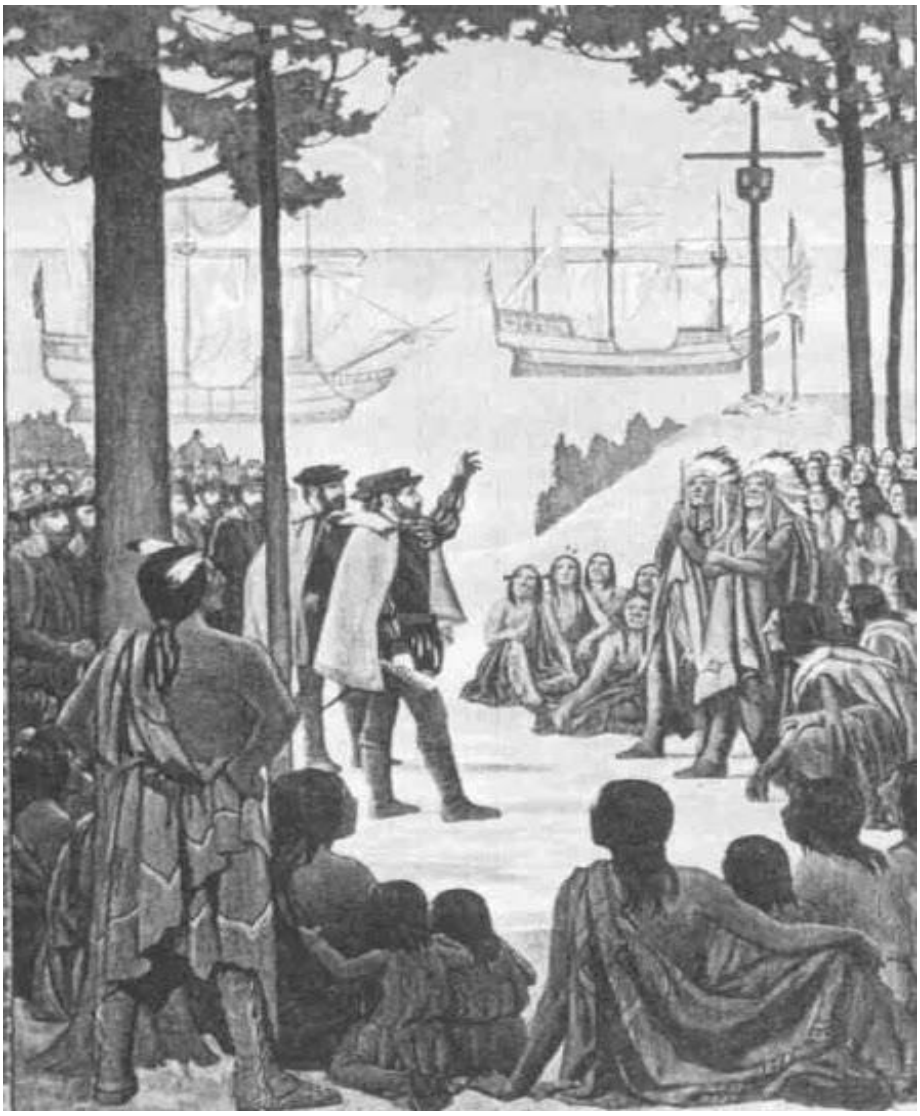

Figure 1. Reid, G. (1928). Mural on Wall.

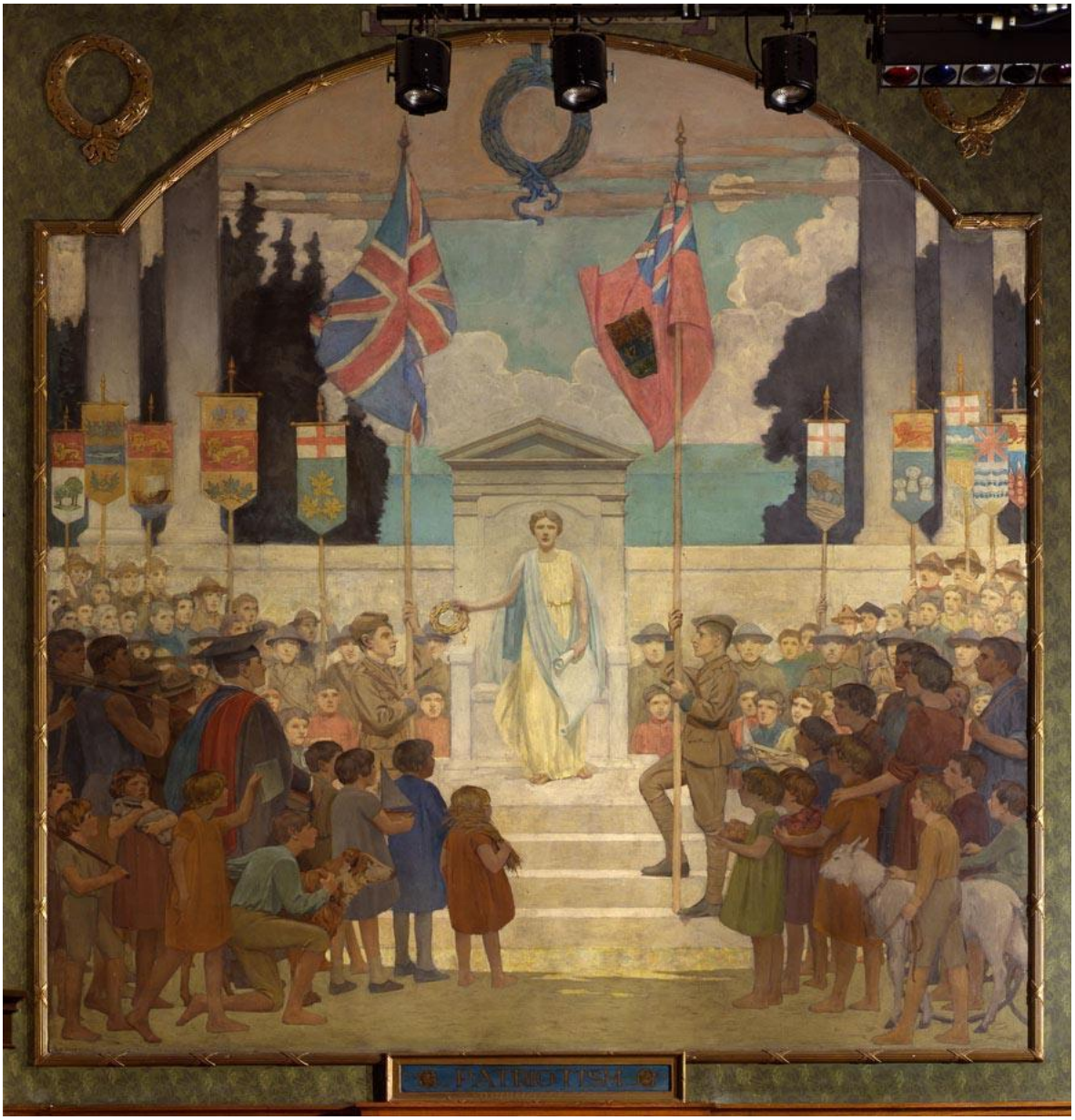

Figure 2: Reid, G. (1928) Mural on Wall. Patriotism.

The candidates delivered their speeches to applause ranging from polite to thunderous. The speeches were forward facing: for example, Christie, running for Treasurer, promised to "make next year the lit year you want it to be!" Many of the candidates' promises also looked backwards. Paired with critiques of the current council, they promised a better future for the

school and its students. Julie, running for social convenor, promised to plan events that all students could actually be excited about — the outgoing president and vice president rolled their eyes as she told the audience that they deserved better than "dried up chicken and triscuits" at next year's semi-formal. Another student, running for treasurer, claimed that she would end the mismanagement of the council's funds by elitist council members, and by doing so, would be able to pay for the installation of central air conditioning in the school. In another speech, a candidate for president implored the audience to remember that student council is not just for the elite; another candidate for president, Adia, vowed to make the council more democratic, to make sure that its decisions reflected the wishes of the student body. The tone of these promises reflected the memes-of-the moment. Over and over, the candidates on the stage — children of refugees and immigrants, hijabi students, Black and brown young men — vowed to "Make Simcoe Great Again" and to "drain the swamp" by putting an end to the elitism that they claimed plagued the student council. It was May — Donald Trump had not yet won the Republican primary, let alone the general election. Nevertheless, these ideas were already a part of contemporary political discourse and a reflection of the cruel contradictions of political life.

At the end of the day, after the euphoria of the public spectacle of political speech had receded, the candidates scoured the hallways, removing their posters. Those who didn't could be penalized five votes for every poster left up. This was just one of the many regulations and traditions that governed the elections at Simcoe: prospective candidates were also required to attend a series of meetings, subject their speech to a vetting process, have their posters approved by the student council advisor, and maintain a B average. Ballots were counted by the outgoing council (under adult supervision), and positions had to be won by a 50%+1

majority, meaning that several rounds of run-off voting were often required. What wasn't required was parent or guardian permission: by the time election day arrived, Adia, the candidate for president who promised to make the council more democratic, still hadn't told her parents that she was running. With a trembling lip, she explained to me that she didn't want to get them excited for nothing, in case she didn't win.

She didn't tell them the next day, either, when the news leaked that she would soon be announced as the new student council president. In fact, Adia kept her venture into political life secret for many months. It is was if the weightiness of citizenship, of being a citizen of tomorrow, today, in a political landscape that is did not embrace her or her family as citizens in the way it does white Canadians, was too much of a contradiction to introduce into her family life. Perhaps her embrace of the superficial happiness of multicultural citizenship was at odds with her family's experiences, or maybe it was the prospect of disappointment—the worry that her win was an embarcation into a world of citizenship and politics that would, despite appearances, find a way to exclude her—that kept her from telling her family. Or perhaps it was a discomfort with the uneasy and incomplete disruption of authority that a position like student council president entails—after all, becoming the proto-political leader of nearly 1000 students is not a subtle way of showing off your independence and maturity to your parents.

In 2016 and 2017, I spent 15 months getting to know students like Adia and learning about young people's political lives in high school as I conducted an ethnography focused on the student council at Simcoe Secondary School, an academic-stream high school in a mostly working-class urban neighbourhood. My project started out as a study of "student

voice" within a student council. Student voice is a catch-all phrase for programs and policies related to student leadership, citizenship, and engagement. However, I soon began to notice how students and student voice often had little to do with how citizenship and democracy were theorized and practiced in the school, and how the concepts relating to student voice, like mutuality, participation, and inclusion were sometimes used as a catch-all themselves, to try to contain thornier and often conflicting questions like: are adolescents (good) citizens? What can be made of the conflicts that arise from democratic practices in schools? What is the relationship between young people and the adults who care for them? When I realized that the concept of "student voice" alone couldn't capture this messiness, I expanded my scope—in my fieldwork as well as in my analysis—to consider these affective concepts, which are difficult to encapsulate in a study circumscribed by the boundedness of a cohesive "school culture" or "student council culture".

My time at Simcoe and my conversations with the students and staff there brought the affective politics of youth citizenship and leadership into focus; in my dissertation, I explore the affective and material dimensions of these young people's political lives and the ways that they took up political life as it was offered to them in their roles as student leaders. My analysis shows that the discourses and policies about youth citizenship and youth leadership and the very figure of the young citizen are entwined with fantasies and anxieties about politics, the state, citizenship, and belonging. My central claim is that the political futurity of the conceptual Child, as an affective orientation toward both politics and young people, is one which underpins much of the policy and pedagogy around youth leadership and is often at odds with the developmental and relational realities of being a young person.

My inquiry was guided by broad questions about how young people enact political life and how they become a talisman for adults' affective orientations to the political. The project explores what it is like to be a young person involved in student leadership and looks closely at what is offered to young people when they are invited into the world of citizenship and leadership. Taking the realm of politics as an affective one, it argues that the complex relation between young people and adults is indeed political; and conversely, that the political positioning of young people is firmly embedded in the affective dynamic of the relation between young people and adults. This dynamic — between adults and young people — is a defining element of schooling, and so it produces and constrains the kinds of citizenship work that take place under the umbrella of the public education. The citizenship and leadership activities that young people take part in, whether they are developed organically or are part of an official policy or a long-standing tradition, are interconnected with the affective dynamics of political life: the attachments, fantasies, anxieties and projections that shape collective life. The most important and productive moments in my research were the moments when these affective intensities led to unravellings, creative work-arounds, and devastating disappointments. These moments offered the most insight into the affective dimensions of political life, the complexity of intergenerational relationships, and the central role of schools and their traditions and structures in the political futurity of young people.

Over the course of my fieldwork, which began in January 2015 and concluded in May 2017, I participated in the life of the student council in various ways. After gaining access to the school, which I chose for its diverse student population as well as its willingness to take part in the study, I introduced myself to the student council, and began

participating in and observing its activities, as well as other student leadership-oriented activities and events in the school. Over the course of 15 months (from January 2015 to May, 2017) I:

- attended student council meetings
- attended assemblies organized by the council as well as rehearsals for these assemblies
- assisted with the election process (vetting speeches and assisting the students with vote counting)
- helped out with events including "Spring Fest," on-campus dances, off-campus semi-formal dances, a toy-drive fundraiser, "Welcome to Grade 9" day, and spirit week events
- spent time in the student council lounge, listening, chatting, and sharing snacks
- Attended a three-day leadership retreat with the council, the school's grade nine students, and staff advisors
- Attended two leadership training field trips

Throughout my fieldwork, I saw two separate groups of students fill the student councils' six positions (see *Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3*). I got to know their staff advisors, their friends, and students who were involved with student leadership in other ways, as grade reps or as the heads of other clubs, through observations, conversations, both formal and informal, and by collecting artifacts and documents.

Name (pseudonym)	Grade	Position	Identity notes:
Dina	12	President	Immigrated to Canada from Dubai in junior high
Alicia	12	Vice-president	Korean-Canadian
Kyle	12	Vice-president, External affairs	Vietnamese
Zahra	12	Secretary	Lived briefly in Abu Dhabi, parents moved to Canada from "the middle east"
Chris	12	Treasurer	Filipino
Abbas	11	Social Convener	Pakistani

Table 1: 2015-2016 student council

Name (Pseudonym)	Grade	Position	Identity notes:
Adia	12	President	Somali
Muira	12	Vice-president	Bengali
Safiya	12	Vice-president, External affairs	Sri Lankan
Abby	11	Secretary	Christian, Black
Christie	12	Treasurer	Vietnamese
Julia	12	Social Convener	Mixed race

Table 2: 2016-2017 student council

Name (pseudonym)	Roles	Identity notes:
Mr. Malone	Student council advisor, French teacher	White, gay
Mr. Barney	Principal	White

Table 3: Key staff

Note: My ethics agreement with the school board prohibited me from asking participants about their race. The notes in these tables are based on information gleaned during observations and interviews. In my initial interview, I asked the students to tell me about themselves — all except Julia and Zahra provided a self-identification based on race or religion.

Organization of the dissertation

Each chapter takes as its central object a key moment, event, or series of events in the political life of the student council or the school. In basing my chapters around a narrative thread, I point to an important methodological aspect of my dissertation — the role of writing in ethnographic research. (Chapter two is an exception: it begins with a fictional object — a brief analysis of the film *Election).* Vignettes like the ones that introduce each chapter may be used by ethnographers as an expository strategy — to immerse the reader in the ethnographic scene; and to illustrate "a theoretical concept, a dilemma," or the social or political context within which the research is situated (McCready, 2010). They also emphasize the constructed-ness of the research and the inevitability of authorial decision-making[1]. This technique also has another purpose — in presenting long segments of description and dialogue, adapted from fieldnotes and interview transcripts, I attempt to create for the reader an experience that mimics the immersive, exploratory qualities of ethnography. Just as the sensory experiences of entering the ethnographic scene evoke memories and other associations, I hope that my lengthy descriptions of the world I entered allow my readers to engage with their own histories and fantasies of youth and political life.

The first task of the dissertation is to situate the dissertation in conversation with the historic and contemporary literature about student voice, student leadership, and youth citizenship. This chapter establishes these related ideas as important considerations for scholars interested in the political implications of discourses about childhood and youth as well as for scholars interested in the ways that political and social life shape the experiences of childhood and youth. Using historical examples from the United States and from Canada

as well as contemporary studies, the chapter brings these approaches to the study of children and youth in the political and social context into dialogue with work in the field of critical pedagogy and democratic education.

In Chapter three, I lay out the theoretical groundwork for my assertions in subsequent chapters, beginning with the contention that politics is an affective endeavor. I sketch an outline the affective life of politics—the fantasies, anxieties, and desires that underpin collective life. Drawing on the work of theorists of affect as well as theorists of political life, I make a case for using some of the tenets of psychoanalytic theory "outside the clinic" (Frosh, 2011) and beyond the traditional analyst-analysand dyad; that is, as a way of thinking about the way that we make meaning in the world more generally. The next foundational plank involves unpacking the concept of the political child—the citizen of the future. My theoretical work connects the conceptualized (and often universalized) figure of the child with the affective world of politics, offering a way to understand how certain orientations toward political and institutional life are organized around an attachment to a particular child citizen, and how these attachments in turn organize pedagogical and policy approaches to young people's citizenship and leadership. However, a theoretical approach that is limited to a universalized concept of the child risks erasing not only the differences between young people's experiences (and with them, the legitimizing of certain kinds of experiences over others), but young people's experiences of upholding, resisting, and refusing the affective structures of political life. To mitigate this theoretical blindspot, I turn to the work of Hannah Arendt and Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, both of whose works focus, in different ways, on the emotional and social implications of political investments in children's citizenship.

In chapter four, I describe my methodology. Placing my work in conversation with educational ethnography, and critical educational ethnography in particular, I point to some of the challenges ethnographers face in doing research in the familiar context of schooling. The chapter outlines my entry into the field, my approaches to positionality and the problem of familiarity (Delamont, 2002), and the factors that influenced my decision-making throughout my fieldwork and analysis. Chapter four also explains my approach to ethnographic writing, and in particular, my use of expository vignettes at the beginning of each chapter.

Chapter five takes up the notion of the conceptual Child in an examination of the paradoxical figure of the young citizen — the citizen of tomorrow who must live today within the developmental and structural realities of youth. I present some of the key theories of youth citizenship that underpin contemporary policies about student leadership and citizenship education. Using an example from the Ontario Ministry of Education's student voice policy, I argue that these policies and theories are founded upon an assumption that young people are always already citizens, in full possession of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. I juxtapose this notion of the young but "mature" citizen with Lauren Berlant's figure of the "infantile citizen" — the naively patriotic good citizen that is required to sustain a fantasy of the ideal state. My analysis follows my failed efforts to get the student council involved in a student voice program sponsored by the Ministry of Education. Instead of engaging with the program, the student council decided to raise money to purchase toys for children in a palliative care centre. The chapter analyses both of these projects and the students' responses to them in terms of "mature" and "infantile" citizenship, with particular attention to the students' attachments to the figure of the dying

child of the paediatric palliative care centre. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's theories about the separation of the private from the public sphere and the importance of safeguarding children's newness, I interpret the students' resistance to the Ministry's student voice project, as well as my own feelings of complicity and disappointment, as evidence of a tension between the demand for young citizens to exercise a mature citizenship and the need for young people to serve as a proxy for the infantile citizenship that sustains the fantasy of the state.

One of the central political fantasies of liberal democracy is, according to Chantal Mouffe (2005), the notion that democracy can or should be organized around principles of consensus and deliberation. My sixth chapter takes up this critique and returns to Arendt's concept of the division between the public, political sphere from the private sphere of development and childhood. The chapter's focus is on authority: I sketch out some of the ways that authority has been understood and enacted in schools, and I explore the tensions created by attempts to develop democratic practices by deconstructing authority in schools. I engage Mouffe's argument about the impossibility of consensus-style democracy, mining the affective terrain of authority, adolescent protest, and young people's vulnerability to argue that the inevitable conflict between adults and young people complicates efforts to achieve deliberative or anti-hierarchical democratic practice in schools. The chapter is organized around accounts (mine and the students') of a three-day leadership retreat attended by the student council, a group of peer leaders, and the school's incoming grade nine class. The retreat, known simply as "camp" was heralded by the principal as "very democratic" because the senior students were "in charge," and it provided an opportunity for students and adults to talk about and enact the conflicts and pleasures of authority and

protest. The key moment for my analysis is a skit performed by a group of peer leaders during camp, in which the actors gleefully mocked the teachers' and their own authority and vulnerability, to great comic effect. My analysis of the skit is complemented by interpretations of the teachers and the students' parallel accounts of authority, which illustrate the ambivalent role of authority in young people's political lives.

Chapter seven looks at a fantasy of the state that is particular to the Canadian context: the fantasy of "happy diversity" (Ahmed, 2012). I explore the ways that discourses about diversity circulated in policy and everyday life at Simcoe, and how the student council members were enlisted as "diversity workers" in the service of this political fantasy. Drawing on Berlant (1997), I present the project of diversity at Simcoe as a relation of cruel optimism, in which the attachment to the notion of "happy diversity" created a barrier to those whom diversity mandates purport to benefit. The chapter takes as its central narrative one of the biggest crises I that unravelled during my time at Simcoe. The head of the school's Queer-Straight Alliance planned an act for an assembly that had the student council members dressed in rainbow colours to represent the pride flag and the work of the QSA. Three of the six student council members — all three of its Muslim members — refused to take part in the act; in response, the QSA head invoked the school board's equity policy and threatened to pull out of the assembly. This situation created a political crisis in the school: the students who were charged with the political future of the fantasy of "happy diversity" resisted. It was, at once, a failure of the conceptual Child to perform the fantasy of diversity, but it was also a crisis of friendship and of authority: students felt betrayed by each other and by the teachers upon whom they thought they could rely for support. I unravel the conflicts and the tensions that surfaced during this

crisis, with an eye to the role of compromise in affective politics as well as in the development of adolescent and young adult identities.

In the final chapter, I conclude by returning to the questions raised in my introduction, first to consider how they are defined by the scene of my research, and then to imagine how they might lead to new questions about young people's citizenship outside of the limits of schooling. While the final chapter does not provide a set of solutions of recommendations, it does bring together the findings from each chapter to suggest ways of thinking differently about young people in the context of citizenship and political life.

Chapter 2

Student Leadership and Student Voice in Research and Fiction

The student council is a mundane feature of high school life in North America; it is not innovative, fresh, radical, nor particularly noxious. While inspirational young activists appear in the news with certain frequency, student councils are generally unremarkable. Nevertheless, when I tell people that my that my dissertation research is about a student council, almost everyone eagerly responds with a story about their own student council experiences. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a disproportionate number of my friends and acquaintances were members of their own high school student council executives, their facility with the politics and bureaucracy of schooling having followed them from public school to an academic career. Their stories were mostly positive but were often tinged with a sheepish sense of recognizing, from a distance, adolescent naiveté or even arrogance. Another significant group remembered their high school student council with contempt, as winners in an undemocratic and insignificant popularity contest, as a self-serving group of careerists, or a proto-oligarchy lording its privilege over the other students. These unguarded responses to my research were often recounted in a light-spirited way; nevertheless, they point to a sense that this traditional mainstay of high-school life does hold an important spot in people's memories of school, perhaps because it encapsulates some of the conflicting ideas that we hold about young people, democracy, social change, and schooling.

Student councils also show up—though not as much as I'd expected, given their ubiquity—in popular culture. In episodes of *Everyone hates Chris*, and *The Gilmore Girls*, student councils are shown as impotent; the illusion that students might have authority

becomes the butt of the joke. Or, as in an episode of *Veronica Mars,* they are a plot device against which battles between cliques are staged. Perhaps the most well-known student council movie is Alexander Payne's 1999 film, *Election*, which provides a darkly humorous glimpse of the anxieties and fantasies surrounding both young people and the complexities of collective life. Set against the mundane backdrop of suburban middle-America, *Election* tells the story of a high school student council election which threatens to completely unravel the film's main characters. Tracy Flick, an impossibly chipper, overachieving high school senior, is determined to be elected president of Carver High. Standing in her way is the civics teacher, Mr. McAllister, who thwarts Tracy's chances for an easy victory by convincing a popular jock, Paul, to run against her. To complicate matters, Paul's burn-out younger sister, Tammy, also decides to run. On the surface, it's a story about revenge and desire: Mr. McAllister sets out to crush Tracy's dream in order to avenge his best pal, a former teacher who had an affair with Tracy, and whose life and career were subsequently ruined; and Tammy's bid for the presidency is an attack on her brother Paul and his new girlfriend who also happens to be Tammy's ex-girlfriend.

The film is framed by the liberal political fantasy of the "good life." At the beginning of the film, we are introduced to each character's stable, suburban life, and everything is fine. However, cracks soon appear. As Paul, the jock says, "Things were going pretty well in my life. That is until things started going haywire with that damn election." Both Tracy and Mr. McAllister hinge their identities on the routine rehearsal of democracy at Carver High. Mr. McAllister says: "preparing them [the students] for the tough moral and ethical decisions they'd face as adults, that's how I wanted to spend my life." Tracy sees the election as a stepping stone towards the "good life" which she characterizes as "going to a good

college, moving to an exciting city, and making loads of money." She trusts the voters to make the right choice in electing her, and clings to the idea that "win or lose, ethical conduct is the most important thing." Her campaign sign points to the promise of youths' political participation: asking voters to "sign up for tomorrow today." These sentiments about participation, good citizenship and attachment to a particular version of the liberal-democratic state were also a central thread in the student council election cycle at Simcoe. The candidates in Simcoe's student council election, having somewhat more tact than Tracy Flick, did not announce their ambitions; nevertheless, the discourses about leadership at Simcoe carried the same sense of promise, futurity, and attachment to the liberal democratic state as those that *Election* satirizes.

Moving past these scenes of optimism, though, the film delves into the raw conflicts and powerful emotions that roil underneath the happy citizenship on display in both *Election* and at Simcoe. The film stages the collapse of the student council election against the cracking veneer of "the good life" in the worlds of Tracy and the people who surround her. In *Election,* power, or the promise of power, corrupts, but the film often complicates the idea of political power by conflating it with paranoid infantile desires. Mr. McAllister sees Tracy's face while having sex with his wife; Tracy throws a tantrum and commits a violent act of vandalism against her opponents; and Tammy, a burnout contestant for student council president expresses desire to destroy the whole institution of student council in her campaign speech. In other words, while satirizing a blind trust in the goodness of the morals and ethics that sustain the fantasy of liberal democracy, the film also manages to highlight the palpable role of the unruly affects involved in political life. *Election* uses satire to show how the affective dynamics of political life work through youth in schools, by

shaping the parameters of youth citizenship and youth more generally; the uncanny performances and sharp characterization show the how political and social discourse shape young people's experiences and their political subjectivities. In this sense, it is a useful object for those interested in the political aspects of childhood and youth, and it foreshadows some of the themes that I explore in my dissertation.

In popular culture and in our memories, it seems, student councils embody much of what's wrong with liberal democracy—impotence, elitism, corruption, partisanship, wastefulness, opportunism, egoism. These retrospective appraisals of student council also point to the tensions in how we theorize youth, and they offer an opportunity to see how the attribution of certain qualities to young people, who are often characterized as hopeful, innocent, and untainted by cynicism, is unevenly distributed.

Today, a wide range of programs and opportunities about citizenship, leadership, political engagement, and social change is on offer to young people. On the surface, these programs aspire to contribute to the broader goals of compulsory education in a liberal democracy: to prepare young people for life as active participants in democratic society. For example, the Toronto District School Board's mission statement is "to enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values they need to become responsible members of a democratic society" (TSDB, 2018). Part of this is the "democratization of democracy" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 2) — a push to open up democratic process by including minoritized and marginalized groups in decision making that affects them. In 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 12) declared that young people have the right to be involved in policy decisions that affect them (UN, 1989). The

language of the article is vague, and its adoption is clearly not universal; nevertheless, nearly 25 years later, the notion of youth-as-policy-actor has gained traction both in theory and in practice: youth involvement in policy making has become a "*de facto* requirement" (Black, 2011) or, a "policy cliché," (Bessant, 2004), depending on the author's perspective.

Student voice and student leadership in 20th century schools

The notion that students should be involved—in some way, for some reason—in the procedural aspects of education is not a new one. However, it presents a paradoxical convergence of policy development and popular conceptions of children and youth. While critical approaches to policy study have become more common in the past several decades, traditional, rationalist approaches continue to dominate policy research in the public sphere. Dominant approaches to policy emphasize the rationality and expertise of policy makers as keys to the success of policy. It is somewhat surprising, then, that this environment has allowed for the emergence of youth participation in policy development as a relatively common aspect of youth-oriented policy processes, and moreover, one that is entirely mainstream, i.e., not relegated to the ranks of grassroots movements. In contemporary as well as historical constructions of youth, the young person is constructed, variously, as incomplete, immature, irrational, even monstrous—not, apparently, ideal candidates for a policy process that values rationality and neutrality (Lesko, 2001). So how have these two come together?

Student participation, progressive pedagogy and empire.

My survey of high school student councils and youth engagement begins in the early twentieth century, a time which roughly coincides with progressive reforms in curriculum and schooling; however, student participation in policy matters relating to education has a much older history than this would suggest (McKowan, 1944). Contemporary research relating to student leadership, citizenship, and participation in policymaking has largely coalesced around the concept of "student voice" —the notion that young people should have a meaningful role in policies and practices that affect them. My review focuses on this area of research and connects the umbrella concept of student voice with the role of compulsory schooling, particularly within the context of the progressive education movement. My focus is on public schooling in North America and the UK, beginning from the late 19th century.

The gradual introduction of compulsory schooling and school reform throughout North America in the 19th century reflected a generalized anxiety about children and youth: movements to reform schools were concerned with children's corruptibility, their fragile innocence, and their capacity for perfection. If done right, schooling might save children from their own wildness, shepherding them towards obedience, purity, goodness (Lesko, 2001; Prentice, 1988). The rise of the progressive education movement at the turn of the century coincided with a period of imperial anxiety, and the goals of mass compulsory education shifted to include citizenship and leadership as schools took on the role of "proto-state."

Nancy Lesko (1996) argues that the position of youth in (American) society can be examined through the lens of colonialist discourse, and that adults' drive to measure, delegitimize, protect, moralize, and educate young people reflects the "ways in which the colonial past is 'present' in contemporary knowledge about adolescence" (Lesko, 1996, p. 455). According to Lesko (1996), in turn of the century America, young people—in particular, boys—signaled a ray of hope during a time of "nervous masculinity" (p. 458) and uncertain economic and domestic conditions. During this period of nation-building, the task of raising (white, middle class) boys into masculine, adult leaders was a critical task of scientists, political leaders, and educators. Scientific knowledge about human development turned toward addressing the problems of delinquency and moral softness in boys, and the relatively new fields of evolutionary biology, anthropology and psychology were at the forefront.

The turn of the century marked an increased interest in civic education, student governments, and "model city schools" (McKowan, 1944), which, in theory, operated as self-contained, student-directed microcosms of the adult world. In line with the goals of the progressive education movement, the purpose of these educational experiments was to train students in democracy, civic participation, and patriotism, and to fortify young peoples' capacity for leadership. In addition to responding to broad anxieties about empire and nation, the notion of practical training in civics and government aligns with the colonialist "rescue" discourse that Lesko (1996) argues characterized this era's construction of the relationship between youth and adult. Through participation in educational policy, adults could save youth from the perils of their younger, more primitive selves: delinquency, laziness, and irrationality.

In Canada, curriculum documents from Ontario and from Saskatchewan show a similar connection between the influence of progressive education and the aspirations of the newly-expanding nation (Lewis, 1997). Around the turn of the century, children studied the lives and good works of national heroes so that they might "form moral notions" and learn "patriotism and civic duty" (McDonald, 1982, cited in Lewis, 1997, p. 26). According to Lewis (1997), these efforts focused on the acquisition of knowledge about participation and citizenship, rather than engaging the students directly in political or civic activity. In inter-war years, and under the influence of progressivist theories of curriculum, civic education and participation became subjects to be learned through experience. Ontario's 1937 curriculum asserted the experiential imperative with regards to the development of the "good citizen": "The social virtues of the good citizen are not things merely to learn about. They are to be achieved by practicing them. […] The school must, therefore, be so organized as to permit of their growth and exercise in situations that require their practice" (Ontario, 1937, cited in Lewis, 1997, p 28).

While the "model city schools" represent one of the progressive education movement's most radical attempts to realize its pedagogical goals, later incarnations of student civic engagement were less committed to lofty democratic ideals. Beginning in the 1920s, student engagement turned toward the operation of the school, and student councils were established to improve "student control" in junior high and high schools (McKowan, 1944). This method, designed in 1928 by Raymond Drewry, assigned responsibility to students for matters such as monitoring hallway traffic, ensuring proper lunchroom behaviour, patrolling nearby crosswalks, and even organizing student-run courts which convicted students of offences such as taking the stairs two-by-two and yelling in the

hallway (Morgan, 1930). Here, the school might be seen as a self-contained "state" with its own social order; the students as its citizens with their own disciplinary roles. School principals endorsed the method "because it work[ed]" (McKowan, 1944).

This sentiment, "because it works," reflects the instrumentalism that characterizes young peoples' participation in the life of the school in the period following the First World War. Students became proto-citizens whose lives in the school ideally constituted a rehearsal for full-fledged citizenship. The aim of the school was to provide opportunities for young people to practice the political/civic skills that would be required of them as good adult citizens. Their proto-political activities—from experiments in student-led democracies to student-led 'courts'—contributed to the institution's effectiveness as a training ground for citizenship; and moreover, in the later student councils, provided an "it works" method for accomplishing the school's more mundane goals: to maintain order by using the students themselves as the mechanism of control.

Governing students through freedom: student protest and student voice.

The notion that student councils and other outlets for student voice might be protective against rebelliousness and social disintegration is clear in a spate of works published during the late 1960s and early 1970s—a period of time marked by widespread student unrest in high schools as well as in colleges and universities. The tensions in high schools were real: in 1969, more than 2000 high schools in the US experienced student strikes, walkouts, boycotts, or riots.

Many authors from the late 1960s and early 1970s identified students' grievances as legitimate (House, 1970; Pilder, 1970; Gudridge, 1969) and proposed progressive solutions

which now seem relatively banal (e.g., flexibility in course selection, relaxed rules about hairstyles, and transparency about discipline and regulations). However, there remains in many of these scholarly works and policy texts a distinct sense of anxiety about the stability of the liberal democratic state and the broad social and political changes and taking place at the time. For example, in a publication from the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1968, Allan Glatthorn argues that high school students' "unwillingness to accept the adult life offered by their society" (Glatthorn, 1968, p.7) in favour of a descent into rebelliousness and apathy should be seen as a threat to an orderly society. Glatthorn's anxiety about the coherence of the state in the face of youth rebellion is explicit. He presents as contagious the effects of the civil rights movement and the student protests of the 1950s and 60's and frames them as a crisis of authority both in schools and in American society in general. The strategy he proposes for preventing and subduing unrest—the bestowal of autonomy and a degree of freedom upon students as a means of governing them—sustains both the fantasy of a coherent and predictable state as well as the promise of liberal democratic freedoms.

Glatthorn's "government through freedom" approach to unrest in high schools is typical of much of the student voice literature during the student protest era, and it points to a solution that Nikolas Rose (1999) might describe as truly modern. Rather than imposing discipline and control from above, scholars such as Glatthorn (1968), House (1970), and Gulridge (1969) propose staving off social unrest by encouraging students from all ranks to participate in their own governmentality through enhanced student voice and participation in the operation of the school. Granting students (and student councils) "genuine—albeit limited—authority" (p. v.), suggests Glatthorn, is the best way to suppress

rebellion. Glatthorn's functionalist and racist goals for school and society seem regressive to the contemporary reader, as does the frankness with which he dispatches student autonomy to achieve the goals of suppressing student protest and activism. However, strategies similar to his "government through freedom" (Rose, 1999, p. 74) approach underpin much student voice research today, while at the same time providing grounds for critique.

Student voice and the neoliberal school

The degree to which the political and affective underpinnings of "student voice" are acknowledged and made explicit in contemporary research varies. Since student voice has so often been taken up as a practical intervention, its theoretical foundations have often been neglected in favour of work which focuses on pragmatic issues: program design, implementation, and evaluation (Cook-Sather, 2006; Hallet & Prout, 2003; Flutter, 2006; Levin, 2000; Rudduck, 2006; Taylor & Robinson, 2007). These practical studies often make connections between student voice and individual student achievement (Rudduck, 2006), social development (Mitra, 2004; Peddler & McIntyre, 2006; Shelley, 2009), and school improvement and reform (Flutter, 2006; Levin, 2000; Silva, 2001), though they rarely account for the circulation of power in these spheres. However, the roles of power and ideology are of key concern for some contemporary critical student voice scholars who, like Wyant (1973) criticize student voice policy and scholarship for not considering the effects of power in their analyses and recommendations.

While dominant contemporary conversations about student voice relate it primarily to school and student improvement (which are in turn connected with national narratives

of progress and wealth), the dominant counter-narrative considers the ways in which student voice is implicated in the commodification of schooling. Echoing the complaints of scholars working in the field of student voice in the late 1960s and early 1970s, prominent British student voice researchers Julia Flutter and Jean Rudduck complained in 2000 that student voice was almost entirely absent from conversations about pedagogy and policy. A decade later, a more common critique among student voice scholars is that despite being mandated by various levels of government and by non-governmental agencies, or perhaps even as a result of this, student voice and other student participation programs are taken up at a rhetorical level in schools, or worse, that they are employed as an instrument of an increasingly market-driven educational system. Fielding (2004) claims:

> …the current vogue for student voice is primarily an instrument of school effectiveness driven by adult purposes linked firmly to economic performance and the continued ascendency of those in positions of power…. Promotion of student engagement turns out to be important and prominent for much the same reasons as 'user' engagement is important in other professions; that is to say, they are both essentially disciplinary devices aimed at increased compliance and enhanced productivity (p. 205).

Here, Fielding points to the way that student voice is dispatched as a technology of governmentality, in the service of the late-capitalist state. Whereas in the student protest era, student voice scholars and policy makers advocated student voice as a way to suppress rebellion and thus advance the state's aims of stability and order, in the contemporary context that Fielding describes, student voice serves as a mechanism for advancing a

different set of goals: national productivity and wealth within the scene of global capitalism.

The language of empowerment, rights, and dialogue which fills much of the practice and policy-oriented literature has the potential to obscure what Fielding, (2004) as well as Rosalyn Black (2011) and Judith Bessant (2004) recognize as (neo)liberal state efforts regulate young people. Both Black (2011) and Bessant (2004) use critical policy analysis to point to the ideological underpinnings of the recent intensification of the call for student voice. Bessant (2004) claims that youth participation policies—including the student voice movement—can be linked to individualist "third-way" (neoliberal) approaches to social and fiscal policy. She draws on Foucault and Nikolas Rose to argue that the notion of youth development (employed by Mitra, 2004, for example), when it is tied to youth participation/student voice, reflects a "new" way for the state to manage young people's transition from "rebellious and offensive" youth to productive adult citizenship. If in previous iterations of the "youth-at-risk" discourse, degeneracy, delinquency, and precociousness were the youthful characteristics that necessitated young people's control by the state through compulsory schooling, in Bessant's critique, disaffection, alienation or a failure to "get on board" with third-way social and political understandings of citizenship constitute the rebelliousness and offensiveness that require management by the state. In the context of the neoliberal climate within which student voice/youth participation in policy has been "discovered" (Bessant, 2004, p. 88) this failure to "get on board" constitutes a real threat. Furthermore, Bessant argues that youth participation schemes which are based around the notion of developing "competencies" produce subjects whose notions of democracy and citizenship are contiguous with that of the dominant social order. Similarly,

Black (2011), argues that youth participation is a "contested space," one that is "subject to various interpretations and applications and is employed in the service of various agendas" (p. 464) and points to its possible role in the allocation of responsibility to young people for what might previously have been understood as falling under the purview of the state.

The young citizen.

A separate but related theme arising in contemporary student voice scholarship is the question of how young people are constructed in student voice research and policy work. The way that student voice research theorized the young subject shifted quite significantly over the course of the later part of the 20th century: In the 1970s some researchers cautioned against giving students too much freedom (Wyant, 1973), or remarked with surprise that young people were "capable" in advisory roles (Meighan, 1978); by 1989, the UN Rights of the Child declared that children have the right to be consulted on matters that pertain to them, and in 1992, Roger Hart's famous and widely cited student engagement ladder (fig. 3) suggests that young people should participate as equals alongside adults in decision making and policy

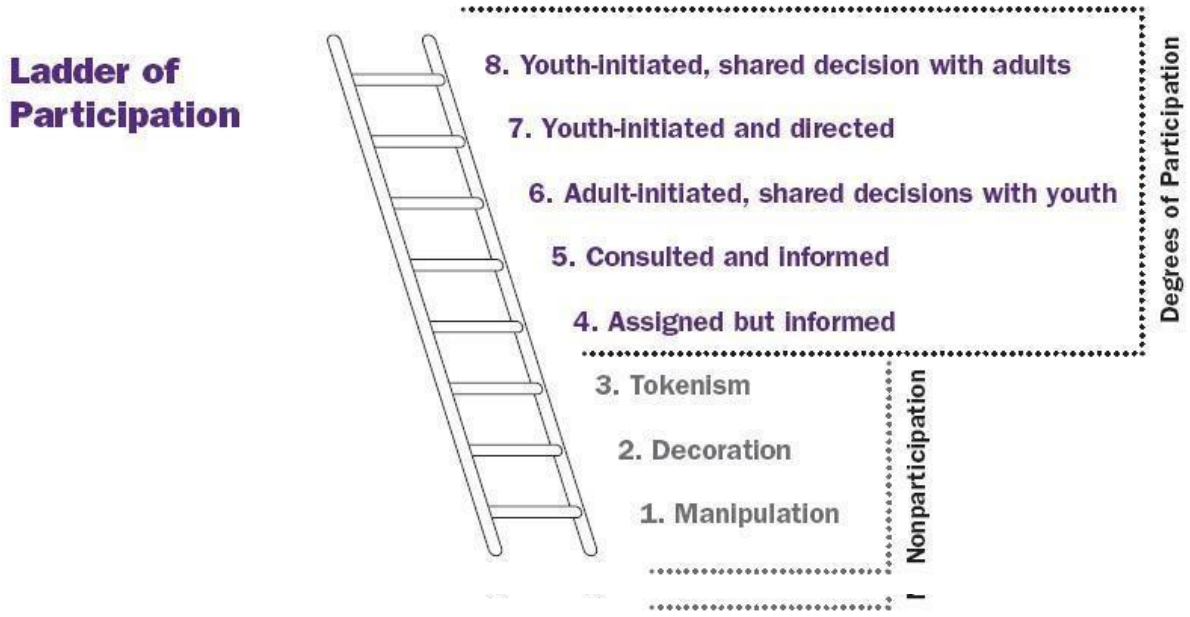

Figure 3: Ladder of participation (Hart, 1992).

initiatives. This rather rapid shift, from the perception of youth as inconsistent and untrustworthy to fully capable, rational, and thus deserving of "voice", is not often considered by student voice scholars, other than to remark on its incompleteness. Indeed, many student voice scholars lament what they describe as a persistent perception of young people as developmentally unprepared to act participants in the rational world of policy (Fielding, 2004; Mitsoni, 2006; Schratz, 2005).

The idea that dominant educational discourses produce youth as not-yet fully developed and thus incapable of "full-grade citizen[ship]" (p. 96) is a central theme for critical scholars like Fielding and Moss (2011), Black (2011), Biesta and Lawy (2006) and Bessant (2004), who argue that contemporary educational policy making practices fail to

accord young people status as fully developed subjects. Bessant (2004) characterizes the belief that young people are not sufficiently developed to effectively participate in meaningful ways as both sentimental and scientific, and like Lesko (1999), links this to the work of developmental psychologists and childhood experts. Similarly, Biesta and Lawy (2006) critique contemporary directions in citizenship education in the UK, which focus on developing in youth the skills and values "to make themselves effective in public life" (p. 71). They argue that this orientation toward student voice views citizenship as an outcome that is attained only when certain skills have been mastered, when in fact, young people are always already immersed in the social and political world and thus are already experiencing citizenship every day.

Amidst critiques of young people's discursive production as not-yet fully-formed subjects, student voice research takes on a transformative or even emancipatory bent. It contends that in embracing young peoples' full capacity as political agents and decision makers, student voice has the potential to effect real change where traditional, adult-directed interventions have failed. Mitra (2004), for example, suggests that student voice is the missing link in heretofore ineffective school reform programs. Fielding and Moss' (2011) perspective is more radical: they envision student voice as the catalyst in a large-scale reimagining of the purpose and structure of public schooling world-wide. However, this body of research about the child as always already citizen tends to imagine a universalized child, overlooking the social, discursive, and economic factors that can create barriers to young people's adoption of the rights and responsibilities afforded through citizenship. As critical race scholars of education have maintained, non-white students are often constructed as threatening, precocious, and adultified—without the innocent and

optimistic naiveté of white children. The picture of future citizenship, then, comes to exclude these children onto whom hopefulness and futurity are not projected. Maureen Moynagh (2014) exemplifies this in her work around islamophobia and child soldiers, arguing that unlike their white, Western counterparts Muslim boys are not granted the status of "future citizen" and are instead excluded from this political futurity. I return to these unexamined assumptions about the distribution of the characteristics, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship in chapter seven. For now, I turn to an important—if universalizing—Arendtian critique of the "student voice" movement.

Writing in the context of a protracted national debate about Scottish independence (and the consequent discussions about citizenship and participation in democracy), Sharon Jessop (2009) argues that "great political hopes and expectations are invested in children as an emerging citizenry" (p. 980). However, Jessop goes further than both Bessant (2004) and Lesko (1996) in her discussion of the construction of youth as "incomplete," pointing to an "unresolved contradiction" (p. 981). She notes that the dominant approach to youth participation and citizenship education in policy and curriculum development is one that "gives due regard to the development or of the incompleteness of children" (p. 981), by adding an "age appropriateness" clause to their policies. The UN Rights of the Child and Scottish Executive Education Department are examples of policies/agencies that use this developmental "sliding scale." At the same time, she argues, citizenship is accorded to children in an "unqualified way," positioning them not as citizens of the future, but as citizens now. She argues that this reflects the notion that people are born citizens rather than gradually achieving this status over the course of their youth, and points to the temporal language in policy documents about young people, claiming that in the current

enthusiasm for youth participation, "children are to be considered not citizens of the future but citizens now" (Jessop, 2011, p. 980). Furthermore, Jessop draws on Arendt (2006/1954) to argue that children's inclusion in the public world of political participation presents a risk to both children and the public sphere, as well as educators' and the states' "abnegation of responsibility to represent the world" (p. 992) since it leaves no sense of meaningfulness into which young people may grow, and denies young people's proper entry into humanity. She writes that "an attempt to mold children in such a way that their actions are made predictable, from whatever worthy, even desperate, motives is a denial of their natality, the capacity to initiate and do what is unexpected, which is central to their humanity" (p. 992). And so, despite "worthy" motives, the bestowal of citizenship upon children can function as a foreclosure within the optimistic narrative of youth futurity that is put forth by the language of democratic participation (Black, 2011). Jessop's critique of student participation in policy-making anticipates my argument: she does not propose that young people be shielded from the political and social realities of the world that they inhabit, nor how these realities shape their subjective experiences in school and in other institutions; rather, she draws attention to the way that the very programs that are intended to alleviate the effects of inequity may actually reinscribe it by requiring the marginalized groups (children, and especially children from marginalized populations) to shoulder the burden of articulating the problem and workable measures for remediation.

Jessop's work stands apart from much student voice literature in her engagement with the connection between student voice policy/programming and the national fantasies and anxieties that propel it. For the most part, however, student voice research neglects to consider the affective undercurrents of student voice, even as a retrospective view of inter-

war and student-protest era work on student voice makes clear its defensive grounding in anxiety about the (in)coherence of the liberal democratic state. As my review of the contemporary student voice literature shows, educational scholars have advanced valuable critiques about how student voice is connected with the aims of the late-capitalist state (Fielding, 2004; Black, 2011). These analyses, which focus on determining how student voice fits into the political and discursive machinery of mass compulsory schooling, serve as a point of departure for my dissertation; a foundation for my exploration of the affective dynamics at work in the scene of student voice.

I build upon this body of contemporary research about student voice and young people's participation in political life. My interpretations tease apart the tensions about youth, politics, and citizenship that are built into student voice policy and research and complicate this terrain by introducing affective and relational dimensions. In their campaign speeches, the candidates for student council offered promises that seemed, on the surface, to be instrumental or naively self-serving: they spoke about dances and events, belonging and togetherness. I argue, though, that their promises and wishes point to the importance of understanding student leadership as more than a trivial extracurricular activity for ambitious teenagers. When considered in the context of their precarious membership in a political system that itself can feel uncertain, their comments can lead to an expanded way of thinking about young people's political lives—an approach that understands their conflicted approaches to authority, citizenship, and diversity as located within a particular discursive context but as embedded within a web of desires, fantasies, and anxieties. The work of the student council, their friends, and advisors then, constitute

political practices that are embedded in the affective scenes of democracy, authority, and citizenship.

Chapter 3:

Children, Adults, and the Affective Politics of the Future: Theoretical Framework

. Soon after the dismissal bell rang, students started to wander into Mr. Malone's 4th floor classroom. The meeting of the day was a "super council" meeting. The super council at Simcoe was an extended group of grade representatives and club presidents that reported to the student council each month. Even though it was February, air in the room was dry and dusty, heavy with the warmth of many bodies. Mr. Malone bustled around, pestering students about quiz scores and attendance rates. He was the French teacher; the easy tone of his badgering suggested that he knew his subject's place in the hierarchy of school subjects. Some students dragged the desks around to make a large horseshoe, and Zahra, the student council secretary, and Kyle, the social convenor sat at the front. There were about twenty students in attendance — representatives from clubs like the Anime club, the Aboriginal and Black Student's Club, the Christian Students' Club, the Mandarin Club, and the Athletic Council joined representatives from each grade. A teacher, Ms. Clarke, was also seated amongst the students. A concerned-looking woman, older than many of the teachers at Simcoe and like most of them, white, with waist-length hair, she had a distinctly bohemian style. Mr. Malone, still bustling, puttered around behind them, organizing his own desk and rummaging through papers. He looked up from his work to urge Kyle and Zahra to take command: if they were going to chair the meeting, he said, they needed to get going. Zahra complied, and tentatively called the meeting to order; Kyle draped casually over a rolling office chair, spun from left to right, waiting. The president of one of the clubs offered to take minutes; Zahra replied—her

voice saccharine—that it was her responsibility, but then insisted that the other student could do it if she wanted; the other student returned the insistence and it became a polite contest of generosity. In the end, they agreed to make two sets of minutes.

By now, Dina, the president of the 6-member student council, had arrived and had draped herself in the same languid position as Kyle, wide-set feet planted firmly on the ground, and one arm slung over the back of the chair: a posture of confidence, or even arrogance, that subway riders might refer to as man-spreading.

The club representatives took turns reporting on their activities in the past month. The clubs were all funded to some degree by the student council's budget, part of which came from a small activity fee that each student paid at the start of the year. Most clubs got a few hundred dollars to operate, but these updates felt more about encouragement than about accountability. The clubs seemed to be, at least in this moment, a happy, uniting force; the council, a benevolent parental body, carving out protective niches for the kinds of students that gravitate to manga clubs and Black and Aboriginal students' associations. When the student eco-club representative started to report on a prom dress exchange, she was quickly usurped by Ms. Clarke, who explained the event in detail. Ms. Clarke was also representing the bike club; however, there was no pressing bike club business to report. The meeting moved next to the main topic of discussion: the upcoming semi-formal dance and the problem of selling tickets in time to make a deposit on the venue and provide accurate numbers for the catering.

Dina pivoted into pitch mode, rallying the supercouncil members around the idea of the dance as an important way for the students to celebrate each other and the school—ticket sales will show how proud everyone is of Simcoe, she claimed. She explained that early ticket

buyers would be entered into raffle; Zahra announced that the prize would be an autographed Snoop Dog t-shirt, acquired thanks to a publicity stunt/charity game held a few days previously at the school, sponsored by the rapper and a professional sports team. The pitch worked on me, at least: I was convinced the t-shirt was a coveted object. There was a chorus of approval from the super council members. Ms. Clarke, still seated in the horseshoe of desks amongst the students, though, commented loudly under her breath: "Sure, if you want a misogynistic t-shirt." Zahra and Dina gave the briefest pause—they had certainly heard her comment—before carrying on as if they hadn't. They ignored this intrusion of Ms. Clarke's authority, rejecting her attempt to disrupt the happiness of the moment, to complicate the happiness of the charitable distraction of the event to which the t-shirt is linked. For just a second, the spectre of unhappiness threatened the togetherness of the meeting, and a perennial conflict was uncovered. For a moment, it was old vs. young; wise vs. reckless; us vs. them. I allowed my imagination to escape, envisioning Dina and Zahra committed to a fight against the commercialization of neo-liberal schools and normalized misogyny. But the moment was fleeting. Dina quickly slipped back into cheerleader mode, urging the super council members to hype up the semi-formal to their friends, encouraging the quiet ones personally, by name.

After some more discussion about the semi-formal, Mr. Malone entered the conversation with a lighthearted diatribe about the primacy of academics: he has access to ***all*** *their grades, he threatened, and he doesn't want to see them slipping. "You are the role models!" he reminded them, "so give your best effort. If you're in trouble, leadership means doing something about it. You have to demonstrate academic responsibility." The lecture was prophylactic, even performative—Mr. Malone had already told me on several occasions that*

they were all serious students, brilliant even. Nevertheless, his warning was met with groans and tooth-sucking, and students buried their faces in hoodies and dropped their heads to the desks. This act was well-rehearsed—I'd seen it before, and I would see it again in the months to come. Mr. Malone's threats were gentle and caring, reminding students of their location within the authority of the institution, but also within a framework of care and concern.

* * *

One of the unifying threads in my dissertation is the notion that politics belongs to the realm of the affective. In the case of the student council, as in the case of the day to day lives of Canadians, the emotional attachments, anxieties, fantasies, and desires that structure political life are foundational to the work of living together. The events of a routine student council meeting, the discussions of dances and fundraising and minimum grade thresholds, however, seems distant from the affective life of politics. Nevertheless, we can understand more about young people, their relation to political life, and the implications of their involvement in leadership and other political activities by approaching these activities as the enactment of affective relations in the reality of public life, in other words, as politics.

Like many other fields, political theory has, in recent decades, turned toward affect in a way that would have seemed unlikely a few decades ago. This view of political experience was a near impossibility until quite recently, as political theorists have questioned the privileged position of rationality in political theory at the expense of affect and emotion (Schiff, 2010). Now, a number of political thinkers have made affect (however they interpret it) central to their arguments about power, the state, and collective life. New readings of older works, ones that seemed to eschew the role of affect in the political, have

encouraged us to notice the traces of affect, even in texts that seem committed to rationalist approaches to public life (Heins, 2007).

Emotions and affect in public life

Most of the authors I draw on to elaborate my theoretical framework are explicit in their commitment to an affective approach to politics and take an approach similar to Sara Ahmed's by proposing emotion and affect as produced by and producing the surfaces and boundaries of the social world. Ahmed argues that "emotions are crucial to the very constitution of the psychic and the social as objects" (2004a, p. 10), mediating "between the social and the psychic, the individual and the collective" (2004b, p.119). She writes, "feelings appear in objects [as in individual subjects or groups of subjects] or as objects with a life of their own, only by the concealment of how they are shaped by histories, including histories of production as well as circulation or time" (2004b, p. 121). Thus, in Ahmed's view, affects circulate in the social, becoming associated with certain objects. Political objects, too, are constituted by emotions; fear, happiness, melancholia, and anger, for example, shape seemingly rationalist political decisions around issues of national interest such as immigration and economic policy (Ahmed, 2004). Like Ahmed, Chantal Mouffe, Jacqueline Rose, and Lauren Berlant, the thinkers that are central to my theoretical framework, insist on the importance of understanding political life in terms of affect and emotion. Mouffe (2000, 2005) describes this productive circulation of affect as political "passion," and Rose's work (1996) uses psychoanalytic theory to argue that taken-for-granted objects like the state (and citizenship) are produced through pre-cognitive affective modes such as fantasy and desire. Berlant, (1997, 2011) like Rose, borrows from

the lexicon of psychoanalysis to frame the affective world of politics around desire. These theorists, like many others in literary studies, aesthetics, psychosocial studies, education and political science (Frosh, 2011) often turn to psychoanalytic theory as a framework for understanding the world as relational. Psychoanalytic theory brings a different lens to the problems with which scholars across the fields of education and child and youth studies grapple. Of particular importance to my study is the notion that psychoanalysis understands the unconscious as "a social relation where the divisions, splits, and tensions are a result of the conflicts between expectations of society and the individual desire. And the subject is the result of processes that accommodate those tensions" (Garrett, 2017, p. 8). A theoretical approach that incorporates this version of subjectivity accounts for the subject as "defended, split, and working to protect itself from discomfort while always trying to satisfy desire" (p. 8), and this is a conceptualization of subjectivity that can be useful for theorizing affect.

In addition to these theorists of affect, my analysis draws upon the work of Hannah Arendt, a political thinker whose investment in the role of emotion in political life is more tentative. At many points in her work, Arendt is clear that emotion has no place in the public sphere — this is the domain of thinking and politics; whereas emotion and sentiment belong to the private realm. In this sense, her approach supports the modern, positivist bifurcation of affect and "thinking," whereas the other theorists I engage with here reject this separation, claiming instead that affect and cognition cannot be disentwined. Indeed, Arendt (1963) seems to debase emotional incursions into the public realm as sentimental contamination of the otherwise purely rational, arguing strongly against any productive role for collective sentiment in democratic political practice. For

instance, in *On Revolution* (1963), she dismisses both compassion and pity as useful political sentiments, replacing them with solidarity, which she concedes "may appear cold and abstract, for it remains committed to ideas — to greatness or honour or dignity — rather than any 'love' of men" (p. 88). At other points, Arendt (1950, 1996) notes the absolutely vital role of emotions in the public realm, identifying a complete lack of emotion as the root of the moral failures to which she attributes the horrors of nazification and the holocaust. While these conceptualization of emotion remain individualized and connected to moral rectitude, Arendt, in later works, acknowledges the productive force of collective emotions, that is the multi-directional circulation of emotions between public and private which shapes not just the individual but the objects in question. In an interview about the student movement (1971) she notes (without condemning) the public happiness, joy in action, and a collective despair that circulated around and shaped the political object of the moment, protest.

These theories of emotion and affect, while originating in different vocabularies and conceptual fields, provide the foundation for my development of a theory of the affective politics of youth, which attempts to account for not only the affective imperative of politics and the symbolic political Child but also the relational and embodied reality of a living, feeling child. My focus is on three concepts that bridge the work of these scholars: collective identities, futurity, and the fantasy of citizenship and the state; although there is plenty of overlap between these ideas.

Collective identities. Whether on a national scale, or in terms of the proto-political scene of student councils, political life is a collective experience. Chantal Mouffe (2005) argues that this link originates in individuals' need to feel affectively attached to collectivities.

Mouffe draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis to make the claim that *jouissance,* or enjoyment or pleasure, in identification with "we" vis-à-vis they — the inescapable antagonism of politics — is an affective rather than a rational or cognitive relation. Politics must, then, be understood as affective: to deny or repress this dimension risks the literal dis-affection of citizens or the re-emergence of passionate attachments to collectivities through "substitute political formations ('social symptoms')" such as xenophobia. (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 48). Schools, as the facilitators of collective identifications with peers, and, often, against adults, can thus be understood as sites for affective politics. In the meeting described at the beginning of the chapter, for instance, Dina pitched the semi-formal as a way to unite the students, and the council members shared a collective groan against Mr. Malone's authority as he badgered them about grades and attendance. These moments of unity reflect the pleasure of belonging, of developing an identity and connections to the world outside of the family. And they form the basis for defining conflicts — the antagonisms that produce political identities.

Conflict—the tension between "us" and "them—is central for Mouffe's thinking about collective life. She criticizes the forms of "consensual" and "dialogic" politics that attempt to erase antagonism, arguing instead for the development of political identities that can recognize, legitimate, and support confrontation. Thus, the affective intensities — including divisiveness and conflict — that are at the root of collective identification are also critical for the functioning of modern democracy.

Mouffe's insistence in *The Democratic Paradox* (2000) on the tension between liberalism and the need for collective identification is instructive for understanding the complexity of young people's identity work and their political mobilization in the context of

"liberal" Canadian citizenship. Young people undertake this work against the backdrop of a tangle of consensus-oriented official and unofficial diversity policies, including multiculturalism, peaceful schools, anti-racist education; however, they do so within the hierarchical authority structures of the school. In chapter six, I engage with Mouffe's (2000) critique of "dialogic democracy" and "good governance" and the contemporary longing for a politics "beyond sovereignty" and "beyond antagonism." These "post-political" visions have been transposed onto discourses and policies about student leadership and young people's citizenship; using Mouffe's theories, I explore the ways that these institutional structures and the related discourses complicate the establishment of political identifications.

The fantasy of the state and the fantasy of citizenship. Like Mouffe, Jacqueline Rose (1994) presents an explanation of the affective dynamics of political life that begins with the notion of collective identification; however, she develops a theory connecting the need for collective identification with the notion of a collective fantasy. She argues for an understanding of the state, and individuals' relation to it as outside of the realm of the cognitive: "fantasy is not [...] antagonistic to social reality; it is its precondition or psychic glue" (p. 9). The state comes into being "only in terms of the inner meaning it holds for its subjects or the subjective belief they attach to it. But these are factors which, precisely because of their intangible, speculative component, cannot be held to reason." (Rose, 1996, p. 9). According to Rose, the collective fantasy of the state is what makes the state coherent. Rose argues that this is the case in Israel's fierce resistance to a bipartite state—the fantasy of the national vulnerability is so great that to abandon it in favour of reality (the fact that Israel is actually a powerful military state) seems to threaten the state's

coherence and survival. In the dissertation I focus on a pair of national fantasies that bind Canadians (and the citizens of many other liberal-democratic states): the political promise of late-capitalism, and, drawing on Ahmed (2010), the fantasy of "happy diversity" under official multicultural policy. Rose proposes the modern state as relying "on fantasy for an authority it can ultimately neither secure nor justify" (p. 11); I suggest that fantasy is also a precarious authority in terms of the institutions of schooling. School serves as a proto-state, functioning as a binding mechanism for adolescents and young adults—people who are in transition from being contained by family life to being contained by the state.

As institutions of the state and as transitional spaces between the present and the future and between private and public life, schools and their traditions can be understood as being bound by collective fantasies about young people, political life, and the future. This sense of the school (along with student leadership, which operates within the institutional authority of the school) as fulfilling the role of a protective entity, shored up by the precarious fantasy of belonging and care, was present throughout my fieldwork: in the scene that opened this chapter, I described the student council as a caring organ of the state, making room, by way of niche clubs, for those whom might otherwise be left behind or left out; the most vulnerable. In this sense, the school and the student council rely on and sustain the fantasy of caring, happy, diverse state. The brief, one-sided exchange between Ms. Clarke and the student council members chairing the meeting, might also be interpreted as a fleeting interaction with the school as imbricated in a fantasy of the caring, cohesive state. When Ms. Clarke reveals a different way of looking at the coveted Snoop Dog t-shirt, one which calls into question the happy togetherness that it represents and points instead to the trade-offs it entails in terms of equity and care, Dina and Zahra pivot

away, refusing to engage, rejecting the opportunity to confront the fantasy of the school/state as such. But this moment also points to another set of fantasies around which the political lives of young people is organized: fantasies about young people and what they signify about the past and the future. My flight of imagination during the super council meeting, in which Zahra and Dina waged an activist struggle against commercialization and the normalization of misogyny, is suggestive of these fantasies about young people, as is Ms. Clarke's backhanded comment itself. These reactions—desires, fantasies—about how young people might properly engage in the political world reflect our attachments to (and anxieties about) young people's political futures

Futurity. The affective investment in young people's futures is not surprising. Young people's political futurity serves as a way to project and propel adults (and young people's!) fantasies into the future, while at the same time facilitating a turn away from the present. This orientation stems from the fact that fantasy, according to Rose, is "always progressive. Never completely losing its grip, fantasy is always heading for the world it only appears to have left behind" (Rose, 1996, p. 4). Like Rose, Lauren Berlant (2011) orients her theories about affective politics toward futurity, framed in terms of desire, hope, and optimism. Her focus is on citizens' orientations to and situations within the promise of collective political life, which she describes as precarious and often cruel. Through the figure of the "infantile citizen" (described in more detail in Chapter five), Berlant positions the citizen's relation to the state as both familial and emotional: the infantile citizen she describes is always in relation to the mature members of her national family, and her desire for a particular relation to the state is one of unbridled appetite. The mature citizen contains the infantile, while redirecting the disruptive forces of her political id.

This has implications for how affective political life reaches into the work of student leadership and young people's citizenship. The young citizen is a figure that is imbued with optimism — the citizen of the future. At the same time, the dominant discourses about young people's political lives are shot through with anxieties about youth, about the future, and about the possibility of democracy and collective life in the late-capitalist liberal state. The optimistic attachment to young people's political futurity allows the participants in student leadership and citizenship programming, adults and youth alike, to inhabit its promise. However, important questions remain. What political promise is imbricated in students' political lives? What is the experience of citizenship for the young leader who is granted "freedom" to lead or to contribute to policy in schools in which she is actually less and less free? What political future did Ms. Clarke (and I) imagine when faced with the student council's disinterest in Snoop Dog's misogyny? These questions require an examination of how the child is constructed in discourse and in politics, and consideration of the children and young people who inhabit this position.

The political "Child" and the child in politics

Berlant's construct of the infantile citizen is helpful for thinking about how the political figure of the Child fits in with the affective dimension of political life. She writes: "in the process of collapsing the political and the personal into a world of public intimacy, a nation made for adult citizens has been replaced by one imagined for fetuses and Children" (Berlant, 1997, p. 1). It is important here to make a distinction between theories of children and youth that develop conceptualized categories of "the Child" and those that open up this category to make space for the emotional and material worlds of children living within it. My dissertation draws on

work from both of these groups of theorists (amongst whom there is considerable overlap) to explore how the conceptualized child runs up against theories of embodied, social experience, and I consider what this tension means for the policy and program goals of student leadership and youth citizenship programs.

Young people are often referred to as the "citizens of tomorrow." In this projection, they become symbolic, a conceptual device. In other words, the "citizen of tomorrow" is an affective scene that relies upon the political futurity of the conceptualized child. In an essay about child soldiers, Maureen Moynagh (2010) describes children's political futurity as "the conceptualization of the child as a potentiality rather than an actuality," which stabilizes an anxious orientation toward the future. It is in itself a tenuous projection, built on hopes, desires, fantasies and anxieties, but is nevertheless an organizing principle in how we understand our connection to the state and our connection to youth. Indeed, it involves temporal trickery by projecting young people's contemporaneous political, social and emotional lives into an imagined, "fantasmic" (Edelman, 2005, p. 112) future**.** For Edelman, the conceptual Child is the keystone of a sustaining fantasy of the future. His interest is in reproductive politics, but his argument is pertinent for the study of young people's citizenship and leadership as well. In a sense, the bestowal of citizenship upon children could be understood as a form of political reproduction. Edelman writes:

> We are no more able to conceive of a politics without a fantasy of the future than we are able to conceive of a future without the figure of the Child. That figural Child alone embodies the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation's good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights "real" citizens are allowed. For the social order exists to preserve for this universalized subject, this fantasmatic Child, a notional freedom more highly valued than the actuality of freedom itself, which might, after all, put at risk the Child to whom such a freedom falls due (Edelman, 2004, p. 11).

This paradoxical positioning — the cruel optimism of the political futurity of the child — is a foundational aspect of my theoretical work in my dissertation.

The notion of the ideal, conceptualized Child, or the child as the site of and solution to adult anxieties about the state, citizenship, and social coherence has been part of the affective political scene at least since the early days of compulsory schooling in North America. The historic examples of student leadership in high schools that I described in Chapter two share a thread that connects them to the scene of affective politics. Beneath the surface of experimental schools and student councils are anxieties and fantasies about both young people and the organization of social and political life. Today's political scene is different from the scene of anxious empire and nation building that shaped early efforts toward student civic engagement in North America, and from the scenes of civil unrest that shaped life in schools in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As scholars interested in the affective dimensions of political life, including Chantal Mouffe, Lee Edelman, and Lauren

Berlant have noted, late or second capitalism has ushered in a new era of individualized globalism, and with it, a new way of relating to the state. However, the affective aspect of political life is not new. It is not a characteristic of late/second modernity, but rather a characteristic of collective life.

What also remains constant is a tendency to understand the child as a concept or as a homogeneous subset of society. This is an important theoretical move — as Edelman notes, the conceptual or universalized Child is an important symbol for thinking about how political life is arranged around certain futurities. However, taken alone, this approach obscures the significant differences and inequalities amongst young people (Black, 2011), particularly in terms of how the figure of the young citizen is conceptualized. The universalized child has certain characteristics that make her appealing for political fantasy—a futurity untainted by cynicism, free from the weight of political failures past and present. It is a political outlook that is rosy, happy, optimistic. However, not all children carry the easy optimism of this conceptual Child: throughout the history of the child as a concept, poor children, disabled children, non-white children, non-Christian children and other minoritized children have been excluded from this scene, cast as instead as dangerous, incorrigible, or threatening to the future they are set to inhabit. Alison Prentice, (1988) writing about the perception of children in Lower Canada in the mid-nineteenth century describes this gap with respect to poor, city-dwelling children, to whom the notion of childhood innocence did not apply; Alan Glatthorn, the principal (cited in chapter two) who argued in the late 1960s that installing a student government could "protect" a high school from the destabilizing effects of civil rights movement follows this pattern by imagining the mobilization of Black teenagers as threatening to civil society. Writing about

a desegregated middle school in the 1990s, Ferguson (1996) notes that African-American students were more often dismissed as troublemakers, subject to arbitrary rules and disciplinary actions that cast them as failures, young people without futures. And today, this disparity continues: As some activists (for example, Ruiz-Grossman, 2018) noted on social media this year, the movement to bring awareness to the issue of routine gun violence and police violence—which disproportionately affects African Americans—receives less public support than the movement to address school shootings, which affects mostly young white people (Ruiz-Grossman, 2018). And Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015) notes that Black children are denied the futurity — the "dream" — that white children in America enjoy. This blindspot in terms of how citizenship, childhood, and futurity are conceived in theoretical accounts of young people's participation in political life points to the risks inherent in universalizing the category of Child in research and in practice, and the importance of grounding this research in the experiences of children and of the social and political contexts that they inhabit.

The relative absence of children, their experiences, and their relationships from research about the political concept of Child is not surprising, given that our society continues to be structured in a way that makes adults' interests paramount to young people's (Young-Bruehl, 2012). But this approach is limiting — it threatens to reproduce the rationalist "tidying-up" of social categories that it often critiques. Research that opens up the category of the Child works against this tendency by complicating the notion of an essential Child, but also by exposing the potential for research about a conceptual Child to become "childist," that is, to focus predominantly on adult's desires, fantasies, and anxieties rather than young people's. My dissertation attempts to do this — to balance questions

about the figurative Child's position in politics with the political desires, anxieties and fantasies of young people while also exposing the places where adult prerogative sneaks in.

In her book about sexuality education, Jen Gilbert (2016) argues for research and theorizing that creates "space inside those quotation marks so the 'the child' can become more than a concept and find some breathing room as an experience, a subjectivity, a memory" (Gilbert, loc 450). One of the best ways to do this is to spend time with children; many of my dissertation's key theoretical moves come from my conversations with and observations of young people. However, I also turn to the work of Hannah Arendt and Elisabeth Young-Bruehl to help flesh out the conceptual Child, to help account for some of the ways that the conceptual child of politics is at odds with the social, emotional and developmental realities of young people's lives.

Arendt and emotions

As I explained earlier, Arendt is, at best, ambivalent about the role of emotions in the public realm. While she is not explicit in her attribution of emotions and affect to these relationships, to a contemporary reader, Arendt's (1958) insistence that the "the relation between grown-ups and children" cannot "be turned over to the special science of pedagogy" (p. 13) suggests an acknowledgement of a collective investment in children, childhood, and the future that exceeds the technical rationality of the public realm. My argument is concerned primarily with Arendt's work on children and their relation to the world and to adults in the world. Arendt famously pins her argument about conservatism in education on love: love for the world and love for children. She argues, forcefully, that young people's newness in the world—their natality—must be preserved, both to protect

children from the public but also to protect the world from children. The world's constant renewal, according to Arendt, is only possible if young people are gradually introduced to it as newcomers, and if adults take responsibility, through authority, for the world that they are turning over to the new generation. For Arendt, children must not be political—to foist the problems of the world upon them represents a disavowal of responsibility for the world and risks violating the very newness that allows each new generation a chance to push past the status quo and set a changing world right.

Arendt applies these concepts in her controversial article, 'Reflections on Little Rock,' (1959) in which she takes up the case of the first Black children to desegregate schools in the American south. Identifying schools as part of a private realm, separate from the public and the social realms, Arendt criticizes the government's decision to begin the work of desegregation and anti-discrimination in the private realm of children rather than in the public and social realms. For Arendt, the decision to desegregate schools before attending to other human rights matters, such as amending anti-miscegenation laws, was indicative of adults' failure to adequately protect children; their failure to understand young people's need for a certain degree of protection from the public, adult world. While I disagree with Arendt's exclusion of schooling from the public, political realm, her insistence that young people's newness — their natality — be protected from the machinations of the public realm is important for thinking about how young people take up or resist the opportunities for leadership that they are offered.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2012) further elaborates young people's vulnerability vis-à-vis the adult world in her book, *Childism.* Young-Bruehl writes: "In differing degrees throughout history, children have been fantasized and set in belief systems that require

them to serve the needs and fantasies served by allegedly inferior" groups. (Young Bruehl, 2012, p. 36). Young-Bruehl thus places this prejudice, childism, in a construction parallel to racism, sexism, and anti-semitism: "at its basis, childism is the legitimation of an adult's or a society's failure to prioritize or make paramount the needs of children over those of adults, the needs of the future adults over the needs of the present adults" (Young Bruehl, 2012, p. 280). Drawing on Young-Bruehl's arguments in *Childism*, and her earlier work about adolescents and authority (1996), I argue that giving authority over to young people, assigning them the tasks that are rightly adults', and placing them at the helm of a form of citizenship not of their choosing represent consequences of contemporary student leadership and participation discourses and practices that do not amount to the prioritizing of young people's needs over adults'. Rather, they are a reflection of adults' needs, desires, and anxieties as much as they are about young people's. This is not to say that young people do not have political desires, anxieties about the state and the future, or attachments to certain forms of collective identity, but that these must not be folded into adults' nor engulfed by the public world.

Young-Bruehl's work is grounded in a psychoanalytic theory development — an approach that also informs my work in the dissertation. According to Garrett (2017), one of the tasks of adolescence is "consolidating a 'me'" out of wishes, memories, desires, fears, anxieties, and past and present relationships with others (p. 56). The earliest experiences and dramas contribute to the self-building project of adolescence, and to the adolescent's "experiments with authority, power, and identity" (Garrett, p. 57). These experiments, along with the adolescent's processes of identity-formation, are key components in my analysis.

Conclusion

As with our relationships with the state and the institution of citizenship, our orientation toward young people is often complicated by fantasies, desires, and anxieties. The relatively mundane meeting that I described at the beginning of this chapter offers a glimpse into this emotional and affective terrain. The structure of the student council and its associated clubs and student groups suggest a kind of proto-state; fantasies about the students' activism—or lack of activism—hint at a particular conception of the child citizen; displays of authority and care intermingle to suggest a relationship that exceed the technical and rational dimensions of political life. We want our nations and our citizenship to provide a certain kind of assurance or subjective coherence (Frosh, 2003, Rose, 1996), likewise, we yearn for a particular coherence from our construction of childhood. Young people's engagement in the political world, then, represents a convergence of these two fraught objects.

Chapter 3

Methodology: Ethnography, affect and the return to school

I encountered Simcoe students outside of the school on only a few occasions. I recorded notes and reflections on these few encounters, even though they fell outside of the usual scope of my research. One of these encounters happened in the summer between my two research years. I was writing in a public library downtown, taking advantage of the air conditioning. Dressed casually, with a backpack on the table next to me, I had surrounded myself with papers, books, and coffee cups. Zahra—the past year's student council secretary—surprised me by appearing at the side of my table. I noted in my field notes that Zahra looked polished and professional—I knew that she had a summer job in a high-end clothing store—and that she towered over me while we chatted, me in my ratty library chair, twisting to look up at her, and she standing to my side. She'd seen me through the library window and had popped in to catch up. I asked her about her job and about her plans for the following year, and she asked my how my research was coming along. Was I finished my PhD yet? Our conversation was stilted and awkward, a result, perhaps of the reversal of roles: fully immersed in the adolescence of "student life," I felt myself scrambling to find the adultness with which I normally approached these situations; it was Zahra who appeared confident and competent. Zahra's question: "Was I done my PhD yet?" was reminder of how my position and authority as a researcher were contingent upon the school for their meaning, just as Zahra's position as a student leader and even as part of the category "youth" depended on the school for intelligibility (Gilbert, personal communication, 2019).

Ethnography makes space for researchers to get a feeling for the way that the field constructs and defines research. In the case of research in schools, this forges an opening for thinking about the confusing and intimidating feelings and desires that emerge in the return to school as a researcher. Given the affective intensity of this return to school, this chapter investigates the challenges and possibilities of an ethnographic approach to research that makes affect central to its inquiry.

Studies about student voice and young people's citizenship come in many forms, including quantitative studies that measure the effectiveness of interventions based on standardized student achievement metrics (Mitra & Gross, 2009), comparative case studies (Mirón & Lauria, 1998), mixed methods approaches (Mitra, 2004; 2006), as well as qualitative studies that rely on focused observations and/or interviews (Mitsoni, 2006; Shelley, 2011). Another common approach is action research or participatory action research — studies which are based around an intervention originating with the researchers (who may occupy another role in the school) or the participants themselves (Gonzales, et al., 2017). These studies, and others, have provided valuable context about the ways that student voice research is mobilized and the kinds of questions it asks.

My decision to use ethnography to investigate my research questions stems from two related points. My interest in the relational and affective aspects of political life meant that my methodological approach would have to reach beyond participants' individual reportage of experiences to a method that would produce data that could be interpreted using contextual and theoretical cues. I also wanted to follow a research methodology that accounted for the collective nature of political life. My research questions and my interpretive approach suggested that I would need to observe how young people

experienced the discourses and affective dynamics associated with leadership, voice and citizenship while learning about the social and relational conditions that shaped these experiences. Conversations with young people and the adults in their worlds would help me begin to differentiate how I experienced these conditions from how they did. Finally, if citizenship and democracy are affective, and if affect circulates at least partly outside of language, then my research would need to extend beyond an analysis of a rapportage of events and feelings to the non-vocalized traces of affect that shaped the participants' lives. Based on these factors, I selected ethnography as a method which would provide substantial, in-depth data which can be analyzed beyond the "comfortable, conventional explanations that presumably will pass muster" (Katz, 2011, p. 445) in the eyes of the researcher or interviewer. Because of its temporal and theoretical scope, ethnography would provide a perspective that cuts across individualized, social, and political threads to provide the necessary contextual, discursive, and affective cues to allow readers to engage with and evaluate my analyses.

I drew inspiration from several ethnographies about young people's lives in school in particular, including Valerie Hey's (1997) ethnography about the complexities of young people's friendships, Ann Ferguson's (2000) study about young Black boys' experiences of school discipline, Wendy Luttrell's (2003) work with pregnant teens in a special school programme, and Aimee Cox's (2015) ethnography about precariously-housed Black girls' enactment of citizenship. These ethnographies present rich data and interpretations oriented toward the social and affective complexities of collective life in schools and other institutions; employ relatively fluid methods of data collection; and their theoretically-informed interpretations are integrated into compelling narratives. In different ways,

these studies attend to the affective surfaces of the institutions and discourses within which they are situated, revealing rich narratives about belonging and citizenship, and demonstrating ethnography's capacity to understand the affective dimensions of young people's political lives.

Ethnography in across disciplines and in schools

The earliest school ethnographers were anthropologists. This research method has also been adopted by scholars outside of anthropology: by sociologists of education (Ogbu, 1974; Willis, 1977) and by researchers influenced by interdisciplinary fields such as critical feminist pedagogy (Gonick, 2012; Luttrell 2003) and childhood studies (Best, 2007). The result of this disciplinary diversity is that school ethnographies are as diverse in their epistemological foundations as the educational landscapes they represent. Nevertheless, school ethnography, whether focused on cultural conflicts, structural inequalities, or the production and contestation of raced, classed, gendered, and sexed identities, turns its focus toward the everyday experiences of students and teachers. Central to this method is the belief that the researcher can glean a focused understanding of how schools work from studying the detailed, everyday experiences of teaching and learning in specific schools. For the most part, ethnographers distill the study of everyday experiences into a handful of qualities that serve to unite many ethnographies of education. These are:

- extended fieldwork with participant observation, informal conversations, and other sources (including texts and artifacts) in everyday environments (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In this sense, contemporary educational ethnography retains traces of the naturalism of the earliest anthropological ethnography.

- data collection which is systemic but unstructured: categories for collection and interpretation are generated based on ongoing data collection and preliminary interpretations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).
- a limited focus which allows for in-depth study. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note the similarities between case-study research and ethnography, particularly in the sociological tradition that emerged from the work of the Chicago school in urban areas. The distinction lies in the broader reach of ethnography: while it studies a group of people in context, an ethnography is not focused on a particular instance or event; furthermore, critical ethnography is interested in the way that the group of people and the context fit into a larger social, political, or affective scene.
- a written product which draws the reader into the scene of study, providing a basis for the reader to determine trustworthiness. Contemporary critical ethnographies often aim to provide evidence of the authorial hand as well (Humpreys & Watson, 2009).

One of the most difficult things about ethnography as a method; or set of methods; is that it is "not far removed from the means that we all use in everyday life to make sense of our surroundings, of other people's actions, and perhaps even of what we do ourselves" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 4). In this comment, Hammersley and Atkinson highlight the challenge of codifying the behaviours of our everyday lives as a research method. The ethnographer's activities in data collection — fieldwork in the form of participant observation, interviews, or the collection of artifacts and documents — as well as the interpretation of this data through analysis and the presentation of the findings

through writing or some other communication all mirror the everyday experience of making meaning of the world with other people.

Unlike some other forms of research, which bring the researcher and the participants together in contrived settings, ethnography, at least on the surface, appears naturalistic. Ethnography's apparent naturalism contributes to the challenge that ethnographers confront in differentiating their activities from the daily work of living in the world. This challenge — which ethnographers face in a variety of ways — is at the heart of some of the key questions in the field of educational ethnography: the related tasks of making the familiar strange and untangling the positioning of the researcher in the field; the subjection of conversations and observations to interpretation as *data,* and the dilemmas involved in authorial communication of these interpretations. Taken together, these questions are at the core of a ethnographers' attempts to establish reliability or trustworthiness — which is in itself a contested aim. This section first describes my research design and outlines my theoretical and methodological commitments to ethnographic research as "openly ideological" (Lather, 1986) and acknowledges how the dynamics of power/knowledge in research informed the way I confronted these questions and challenges throughout the research process.

Doing research in schools and making the familiar strange

Because ethnographers study the everyday experience of their participants, choosing a research site and establishing and maintaining access are key concerns. Ethnographers attempt to understand their participants' perspectives by entering *into* their worlds. Thus, the decision to carry out research in a site that is familiar such as a school has

methodological implications. Far from being novices, most of us are practically experts in school, having spent our childhoods there as students. Some of us, myself included, have returned to school as student teachers, and then as teachers with our own classrooms, and then again as parents of school-aged children. As ethnographers conducting research in schools enter their field, they must confront its uncanny familiarity, a challenge described as "making the familiar strange" (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 20).

Some of the first school ethnographies can be associated with a shift in anthropology that saw researchers seeking out the unfamiliar, or the "strange," closer to home. American anthropologists had always studied "the strange at home" (Spindler, 1959) in their research about indigenous communities. But now, rather than immersing themselves in cultures distant from their own experiences, literally and/or figuratively, these ethnographers turned their attention to seemingly familiar cultures: American inner cities, rural communities, factories, and schools. In these contexts, researchers faced the challenge of conducting fieldwork in a familiar setting. For some researchers, familiarity with life in school produces an emotional response—it can transport us back to the complicated terrain of our own experiences with schooling, inciting feelings of familiarity, dread, boredom and excitement that speak to the ethnographer's delicate position as both insider and outsider. George Spindler, the author of an early school ethnography, remarks upon the difficulty of turning an anthropological gaze toward a setting as familiar as a middle-class American classroom, in a recollection about his first school ethnography, conducted in the 1950s.

> I wondered what I should observe and take notes on that first day and continued to wonder for the next few weeks. It was so boring! I had just come from the Menominee, where Louise and I had a most active summer, including getting witched at a Medicine Lodge ceremony…I knew I was doing ethnography. But there was nothing to see, nothing to take notes on, in Roger Harker's classroom … I thought. (Spindler, 1959, cited in Spinder, 2000, p. xx)

For Spindler, the problem of familiarity presented itself as boredom—an emotional response that is evocative of a long childhood day stuck inside a classroom and which reflects a disorientation about turning a colonizing, objectifying gaze upon a familiar group of research participants. In Barrie Thorne's (2010) description of beginning fieldwork, we can also see feelings that are nostalgic and evocative of earlier experiences in school:

> When I first entered the Oceanside fourth/fifth-grade classroom as a note-taking visitor, I thought of myself as an ethnographer with an interest in gender and the social life of children … But I slowly came to realize that within the ethnographer, many selves were at play. Responding to our shared positions as adult women and teachers, I easily identified with Miss Bailey and the other school staff. Being around so many children also stirred more maternal emotions and perspectives … Occasionally I felt much like the fourth and fifth-grader I used to be, and the force of this took me by surprise. (p. 407)

Thorne was surprised not just by the multiple identifications she navigated in the school, but by the force of those feelings. Even as these emotional responses can complicate research, they can also enliven it and create meaning. If the return to school as a researcher can evoke a return to the familiar emotional terrain of childhood, then this has an effect on the way that we approach fieldwork in schools. Our histories in school—the ways in which school is familiar—are an inescapable part of how we experience school as researchers: these experiences lay the affective foundations for our re-entry into schools, although this may work in unpredictable ways.

Sara Delamont (2002) provides an opposing perspective, describing the effects of familiarity as a threat to the utility of ethnography in education, rather than as inescapable but nonetheless valuable sources of data. She implores ethnographers to "fight familiarity" by conducting research in unexpected school settings and by exploring aspects of schooling and education that fall outside the norm. For Spindler and Spindler (2014), writing retrospectively on close to fifty years of ethnographic research in education, familiarity is also understood to be one of ethnography's problems — they argue it can be at least partly addressed by a concerted effort to "defer judgement, avoid premature interpretation and generalization and confine *ethnography* to observation of behaviour" (pg. 28). However, the suggestion from Thorne (2010) and Heath and Street (2008) that ethnographers work *with* the familiarity that comes from conducting ethnographies in schools as a source of data resonates with my interest in understanding the relationship between adults and young people in the context of student voice and the school.

Choosing a site and gaining access. While Simcoe was different in many ways from the schools I attended and the schools I taught in, it also bore many similarities to the schools of my past. Instead of "fighting" the familiarity of the setting, as suggested by Delamont (2002) I incorporated familiarity as data. Moreover, while student leadership and student voice initiatives exist in all kinds of educational settings, both inside and outside of "traditional" schooling, my research questions suggested an investigation into the discursive construction of student voice in educational policy and in practice. Since discourse (and policy) tends to imagine and produce a normative subject, it was important to me to find a research setting that was "typical," even though this meant that I would be conducting research in a setting that was familiar not only to me, but likely to my readers as well.

My site was chosen through "expedient selection" (Freebody, 2003, p. 76), in other words, it was chosen because it was "available and appropriate" for the inquiry. I developed a short list of criteria for schools to approach as potential research sites: together, these criteria point to ordinariness. I hoped to conduct research in an average-sized public secondary school with a typically- active student leadership culture and a population that mirrored Toronto's diversity. I approached approximately ten schools that fit these criteria and that were located within a reasonable commute from my home. Only Simcoe's principal responded to my request, and this was as result of an introductory email from the vice-principal of my neighbourhood elementary school. My decision was thus made partly by default. Nevertheless, the school met my criteria: while smaller than many secondary schools, Simcoe's population of close to 1000 students did not make it an outlier amongst Toronto high schools; its student council and other student leadership programs

seemed active, based on social media presence and conversations with the principal; and its students reflected the racial diversity of the city, if not its economic diversity. The school's catchment area included several high-density, low income neighbourhoods, and many of the students in the school were immigrants or children of recent immigrants from many different backgrounds. While it offered applied-stream programs and catered to a broad cross-section of students, Simcoe's focus was on its academic stream, and it offered the Advanced Placement program. While not unusual in Toronto, this academic-stream focus sets the school apart from some other high schools in the area — in this aspect, Simcoe was somewhat atypical.

While student leadership and student voice programming often attract students who align themselves with traditional markers of academic success, as it did at Simcoe, my project's scope was limited to studying students who had chosen not to opt-out of Simcoe's academically-oriented culture (by choosing optional attendance at a less academically-oriented school), even if they weren't directly a part of it. While time and resources limited the study to one site, a similar study in a school with a different focus—a focus on applied/technical programs, for example—might allow further investigation into the way proximity to traditional markers of academic success shapes students' (and teachers') experiences and understandings of student leadership and citizenship; a school whose population represented greater economic diversity might have allowed for a more complete investigation into the way young people's citizenship intersects with race, class, and traditional markers of academic success.

Once I had obtained access to the school, I made arrangements with the student council advisor to meet with the student council. My decision to anchor my research

around the student council was based in its availability and its ubiquity. Unlike many avenues for student leadership and youth citizenship, student councils are not at the whim of changing governments or non-profit funding models (two of the non-student council leadership programs I describe in this dissertation, on the other hand, have since been cancelled by the provincial government). At Simcoe, the student council's activities were somewhat predictable, making it possible to schedule visits to the school to align with their activities. The student council acted as a kind of hub for engagement and involvement in this kind of activity in the school. By associating myself with the council, I was able to gain access to some of the less formalized iterations of student leadership and youth citizenship at Simcoe as well as to some of the individuals and small groups of students who pointedly resisted the version of citizenship and leadership represented by the council.

Student councils may be among the *most* familiar of secondary school traditions: I had a minor role on my high school's student council, and my readers may remember the student councils of their own lives in school. While this presents a challenge to the researcher attempting to defend against the interference of personal and discursive histories by bracketing personal experience, I incorporated my responses to this familiarity into my data and made it an important part of how I negotiated my role in the field.

Finding my place in the field. Because of its commitment to "questioning-in-the field" (Erickson, 1984, p. 52), ethnography's basis is largely in fieldwork. This is a reflection of its roots in 19th century anthropology, which saw anthropologists move from interpreting the accounts of missionaries and travelers to conducting their own fieldwork (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007 [1983]). While the characteristics of fieldwork have shifted along with

ethnographers' theoretical commitments, most ethnographers agree that fieldwork is essential for achieving ethnography's principal goal of approaching or approximating an "insider" perspective of a particular cultural context. As Erickson (1984) explains, "what makes a study ethnographic is that it not only treats a social unit of any size as a whole but that the ethnography portrays events, at least in part, from the points of view of the actors involved in the events" (p. 52). However, the question of being an "insider" or obtaining an insider's point of view is complicated by critical ethnography's rejection of a "singular external narrative" (Phillips and Earle, 2010, p. 2) and its insistence on acknowledging the researcher as an active participant in the research process. According to Crang and Cook (2007), the "intersubjective research process is always saturated with relations of power/knowledge"; ethnographers must therefore approach the understandings that emerge from their research as partial, multiple, and contradictory, and acknowledge their own role in producing these seemingly insider perspectives (Freebody, 2003; Phillips and Earle, 2010). The researcher's subjectivity, then, is central to ongoing debates in ethnography around legitimacy, authenticity, and reliability (Denzin, 1997; Freebody, 2003).

My research is openly critical, nevertheless, my affective response to re-entering a familiar setting in a new role was influenced by what Kleinman and Copp (1993) might describe as the lingering effects of anthropological naturalism. While Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) caution that the idea that the researcher's degree of "invisibility" is positively correlated with "the truth" or "good data" can orient the researcher toward an essentialist and ultimately, limited view of field research (see also Kleinman & Copp, 1993), during my fieldwork, I often found myself wishing for invisibility, or at least a convincing teen-ager

disguise. The visibility of my outsider status sometimes made me feel awkward and obvious.

Freebody (2003) notes that "in the practical realities of contemporary qualitative research", issues arising from the critical and post-modern challenges to notions authenticity, reliability, and legitimacy "become blurred" (p. 79). Freebody does not elaborate on what constitutes a "practical reality"; however, Kleinman and Copp (1993) suggest that a researcher's affective response to a field interacts with theoretical and methodological considerations, and my experience confirms this, perhaps not as a practical reality, but one worthy of inclusion as data. In my field notes, I explained my feelings of being out of place and of not knowing what to say or how to act in terms of wanting to maintain access and in terms of wanting to be accepted as a natural part of the setting. These desires, and my discomfort with acknowledging the effects of my intrusion, point to the challenge researchers face in understanding their position in the field as they maintain access and in representing their own roles in constructing the scene of the research.

Qualitative research methodologists have developed a number of ways of approaching the researcher's role in the field. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) identify affect and authority as two axes along which relationships between adults and children can be classified, and suggest that friendship, a low authority, high positive affect relationship, is the best way for adults to honour the power differential between young people and adults while still gaining access to "natural" behavior in the children, access to their "hidden culture" (p. 17). I am cautious of Fine and Sandstrom's claims about the desirability of accessing "natural" behavior, since this appeals to the anthropological fantasy of an uncontaminated research participant (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). However, the matrix

of authority and affect captures some of my concerns about the responsibilities that adults bear in their work with children. While there is a comfort in presenting oneself as an equal, this also means distancing oneself from the often-oppressive realities of unequal power relations.

Of course, I wanted to be friendly. But the role *friend* is a particularly important one for adolescents. I wanted to bring my adult privilege to my relationship with the students; the accompanying adult authority and responsibility were an impediment to real friendship. Given my argument in chapter six, that adults and young people are separated by a generational difference that at least partly constitutes their subjectivities, and that this difference is at the foundation of adults' responsibilities toward young people, the idea of erasing difference through a contrived friendship role seemed implausible. Moreover, friendships in high school unfold in ways that extend well beyond the boundaries of the school. While the students I got to know were surprisingly unconnected from their phones during school hours, their friendships unfolded as much online as they did in person. Early on in my research, I was invited to join the council's Facebook page. However, I was pointedly *not* invited to join the various "group chats" through which the students communicated outside of school. I got a glimpse of these interactions when jokes and quarrels from the group chat resurfaced in "real life" conversations. Given these reservations, I defined my role as "helper" rather than as friend—a role which would be high in positive affect and would fall somewhere in the middle of high and low authority on Fine and Sandstrom's matrix.

Throughout the year, I helped the student council with mundane tasks—numbering dance tickets, cutting out paper hearts for candy-grams, counting election ballots, filling

water-balloons for Springfest—and with errands that could be accomplished only by my adult privilege. For the most part, this involved picking up and delivering things with my car, for example: cases of hotdogs for a BBQ, piles of Halloween decorations, a cotton-candy maker borrowed from a community centre, and carloads of toys for a holiday toy drive. These moments provided good opportunities for unstructured observations—in the four hours that it took to assemble several hundred construction-paper candy-grams, I learned a lot about the students and the school.

While I tempered my desire to fit in by allowing some of my adult privileges to remain at the forefront of our relationships, I did adopt some of the characteristics of a "least adult role" (Mandell, 1988) in my field observations: I wore very casual clothes whenever I visited the school, rather than dressing professionally, like some of the teachers did, and I dished out junk food in a way that would make most adults cringe. However, these small gestures were moderated by regular reminders of my adult status and privilege.

I also wanted to develop relationships with the adults in the school. Given the institutionalized cleavage between adults and children in schools, my adult helper role was effective here, as well, although it was interpreted quite differently by the different adults I came into contact with. Most of the teachers seemed to view me with friendly indifference. Mr. Malone, the student council's closest advisor and the teacher with whom I had the most contact, jokingly warned me not to "spoil" the student council by working too hard for them, even as he put in long hours helping them with their projects. His concern seemed protective, as if, in my role as friendly helper, I was at risk of exploitation. (It may be relevant to note here that for much of my time at Simcoe, the teachers were working under a work-to-rule labour action). Mr. Barney, the principal, envisioned a different kind of help:

he seemed to understand my helper role as in service to a grander administrative vision for the school. As we stood together in the auditorium watching students file out at the end of the election assembly, for example, he suggested to me that I would be able to help give the new council some "guidance" and "help them get sorted out, keep them on track." For Mr. Barney, the kind of help required was containment, even surveillance. I found a few ways to combine the diverse understandings of what a friendly adult helper might do: I volunteered to act as adult supervision for a number of events (dances, event set up, and election ballot counting), thus relieving a teacher from that duty *and* helping the students, whose responsibility it was to secure a teacher supervisor. The supervisor role was undertaken only reluctantly; however, it contributed to my efforts to preserve my adult-ness.

My insistence on making my adult-ness a constant in my relationship with the students was also in the service of my anxieties as a graduate student researcher. The return to school evokes multi-layered histories. This is complicated by a student researcher's dual role: we may relive our experiences as schoolchildren and as novices through our experiences in graduate school only to face them again, in a new way, as novice researchers in schools, where our histories of schooling reappear. Indeed, my almost obsessive concern with this aspect of research is defensive: as Steve Hebert (2000) notes, "ethnographies are as much about the culture of the student as they are about the studied" (p. 563). While the researcher's positioning and self-representation in the field probably *do* matter to a certain degree, it's possible that they matter more to the researcher than to the participants. In other words, I suspect that whether I saw myself as a helper or a friend or even an adult observer likely had less effect on how the participants in my study saw me than I imagined. I have little doubt that the participants appreciated my material offers of

support, but these did not (and could not) fundamentally disrupt the relations of power/knowledge in my research setting.

Despite this — or perhaps because of this — my reflections upon my position in the school became an important part of my data and analysis, since they had significant effects on my understanding of the relationships I developed as a result of interactions with participants in my fieldwork.

Systemic, Recursive Data Collection and Analysis

Ethnographers' approach to data collection is differentiated from the everyday work of understanding the world around us through its recursive, interpretive approach (Freebody, 2003; Heath & Street, 2008). The notion of recursive, integrated data collection and analysis is related to the researcher's inclusion of reflection and affect as data, as Kleinman and Copp (1993) contend: "By omitting our analytic thoughts and feelings from note taking, we come to believe, like positivists, that data collection and analysis are distinct stages of research. (p.19)". Heath and Street describe ethnography as extractive — almost greedy — in its approach to data: its scope is wide and inclusive, including participant observation, interviews, the researchers' reflections and the collection and analysis of documents and other artifacts. Ethnography's data collection techniques are fluid: they account for the integration of new directions in research that result from the ongoing cycle of reflection, analysis, and data collection (Freebody, 2003), a characteristic that Heath and Street (2008) describe as that the "back and forth observing, noting, reading, thinking, observing, and noting constitute data collection" (Heath & Street, p. 33). They call this a "constant

comparative perspective," which they claim, "cuts to the past and to the future of the topic or area under study" (Heath & Street, p. 32).

My approach to data production aligns with Heath and Street's suggestions that "reflexivity, rather than innocence, characterizes contemporary ethnography." (p. 34). By being transparently reflexive, ethnographers afford their readers insight into how their ongoing analyses shaped decisions about which data were collected and how. Moreover, this approach allows the researcher to embrace the unexpected, the disappointing, and the confusing questions posed by their research, making space for the unpredictability of affect. I planned to undertake participant observations, conduct interviews and casual conversations, and create an archive of policy documents and other artifacts, but the specifics of these activities were determined by my own judgements, my increasing knowledge of the field and the participants, and my reflections in the field, as well as by practical constraints. Throughout, my aims were to produce a wide variety of data, in order to be able to recognize "co-occurrences" (Heath & Street, 2008), or patterns across contexts, and to use preliminary interpretations of that data to track my research questions and developing understandings as they shifted.

Participant Observation. My fieldwork led to my participation in a wide variety of student voice- and student leadership-related activities: My research was non-immersive with a flexible time frame for fieldwork which was intended to capture the normal rhythms of student leadership and youth citizenship at Simcoe. In other words, I scheduled my research in such a way that I conducted participant observations during "ordinary" as well as "non-ordinary" times (Heath & Street, 2008). I followed a combination of what Heath

and Street describe as “selective intermittent time mode” and “recurrent time mode” to determine the timeframe for my observations. Selective intermittent time mode allows the researcher to “dip in and out” of the research site to observe certain events or to follow certain foci; whereas recurrent time mode entails sampling recurrent events across or within temporal cycles. I began my fieldwork in February and concluded the fieldwork in May, 15 months later. The school-year cycle was especially important for the student council and other student leaders: they progressed through their roles from novice to expert before exiting the scene altogether in May, as they headed toward university or college. My timing at Simcoe allowed me to observe two separate student councils, as well as two election cycles, providing data for comparison across cohorts.

The rhythm of the school year and the student council schedule meant that some weeks, I only visited the school twice per week, for lunch hour or after school meetings. Many weeks, though, I was in the school three or four days, sometimes for half or full days that extended into the late afternoon. In this regard, I followed the flow of the student council’s labour and their emotional investments. My preliminary analyses and my growing familiarity with the field and the participants helped determine which council events and which non-council avenues for leadership and citizenship to focus on. For example, after meeting regularly with the student council, I learned about how important the Multicultural assembly was to many of the students at Simcoe, so I included it in my observation schedule, even though it was not a student council-organized event. My visits were also limited by my own scheduling commitments, as well as by school board regulations that mandated that I not conduct research in the three weeks leading up to exam period.

Fieldnotes. While I was in the school, I carried a small notebook and recorded jot notes. These contained practical reminders (i.e., who attended a meeting, what was discussed) as well as snippets of verbatim dialogue, multi-sensorial descriptions of the environment, my perceptions of the mood or the feel of a room, and brief notes about the interactions I witnessed and engaged in. Soon after I left the field, I typed up and elaborated upon my jot notes, using rich language and evocative descriptions. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) point out that the decision to openly record jot notes in a notebook (rather relying on memory or tucking into a washroom or closet to surreptitiously take notes) is not just a practical choice but a paradigmatic one: the decision to carry around (and use) a notebook serves as a reminder of the inescapable presence of research in the relationships forged during fieldwork.

As Van Maanen (2011) notes, ethnography is marked by the "story-like character of fieldwork account"—fieldnotes lose their sense of narrative coherence if the researcher's focus is turned to capturing every possible detail. Fieldnotes and "notes on notes" help the researcher to see patterns of meaning and to notice when these are disrupted. In these early moments of meaning-making and interpretation, fieldnotes and "notes on notes" orient the researcher to subsequent observations. They are an ethnographer's way of committing the vibrancy of the research setting to the page and yet, they always reflect the researcher's presence. Decisions about what details to include and which to leave out influence the fieldnotes' narratives, and reflections about emotional responses to fieldwork place the researcher's subjectivity at the centre of this data.

I returned to my notes frequently to write "notes on notes" (Kleinman & Copp, 1993) — emerging analysis that incorporated reflections and theoretical concepts. These notes informed subsequent work in the field, my interview protocol, and the theoretical threads that I developed in my subsequent analysis.

Interviews. Conversations with participants in the form of informal or formal interviews are an important part of many ethnographies. I included interviews to learn about the setting and to understand the participants' backgrounds; they also allowed me to get a better sense of participants' own understandings of the events I was observing and the intersubjective processes that shaped youth citizenship and student leadership.

I interviewed each of the members of the student council near the beginning of his or her term in office — some even before they had been elected to the student council (I also interviewed a number of students who did not end up being elected). I conducted interviews with selected student council members before and/or after certain key events in the council's year: around the Welcome Back Assembly, after the Winter Semi-Formal dance, around the elections, after "camp," and around the Glencrest House fundraiser. The students selected for these interviews were chosen based on their availability and their participation (or lack of participation) in the key events. In my interviews, I was interested in hearing the students' own interpretations of the tensions and conflicts that arose during these events. In choosing students who actively participated or who actively chose non-participation, it is likely that I limited my interviews to those students with amplified reactions, missing the opportunity to connect with students whose reactions were less obvious. Moreover, it is possible that the students who made themselves available for multiple interviews were those who felt the most comfortable with the research

relationship—by making these students the focus of my interviews, I may have obscured the perspectives of those students for whom the interview experience felt too intrusive or uncomfortable.

Based on my observations and conversations with teachers and students, I also decided to interview several students who took up leadership roles outside of the student council. These interviews ended up providing valuable context for understanding how the student council fit into the scene of youth citizenship and leadership in the school. I also interviewed Mr. Malone and Mr. Barney near the beginning of my fieldwork and again around certain key events — the semi-formal dance, the welcome back assembly, and the elections.

Because of my investment in the affective world of citizenship and student leadership, I approached my interviews with an eye to understanding how the participants' inner worlds intersected with broader sociological and political discourses. My approach to interviewing was modeled after the "free association narrative interview" (FANI) technique devised by Holloway and Jefferson (2010). Using this approach, I hoped to reach beneath the surface of the material and sociological aspects of student leadership toward its emotional and affective dynamics.

The FANI technique is part of an approach to qualitative research that "attends to *both* the unconscious dynamics which contest the rational mind *and* practices, identities, and discourses" (Roseneil, 2010, cited in Holloway & Jefferson, 2010, p. x). It rests on the assertion that individuals' inner lives are deeply entwined with their outer worlds; the methods are designed to produce data that articulates these connections. By attending to the complexities of the research participants' inner worlds, the method represents a

response to an "over-socialized view of the subject" (Holloway & Jefferson, p. xv). Holloway and Jefferson's key technique is an interviewing style and subsequent approach to analysis that claims to allow the researcher glimpses of the subject's dynamic unconscious: the defenses, fantasies, and anxieties that shape their being in the social world of discourse, language, and power. In their analysis, Holloway and Jefferson turn this around to consider how social structures, such as racism or patriarchy, interact with the participants' inner world—adding to its dynamism.

Following a technique derived from Schutze's biographical-interpretive method (1990, cited in Holloway & Jefferson, 2010), Holloway and Jefferson suggest four principles for producing data that is a holistic reflection of the participants' meaning frames. These principles are as follows:

- Use open ended questions, the more open the better
- Elicit stories
- Avoid why questions
- Follow up using respondents' ordering and phrasing

(Hollway and Jefferson, 2010, p.31-33)

These techniques help orient participants away from explanation and toward narratives. I generally found that the students were less beholden to sociological explanations than the staff members I interviewed. While most of my questions were designed to elicit stories (e.g., "Can you describe a time when the student council had difficulty working with the staff or the teachers?") the student participants were much more likely to respond by telling a story, whereas the adults often retreated to the familiar

and defended terrain of policy- and research-driven "oughts." In fact, the *only* time I was able to elicit a narrative from Mr. Barney was when I asked him for stories about his own high-school experiences. At a distance of 30-ish years, these stories became a way to separate the emotional, lived experiences of student leadership from the well-rehearsed scripts about democracy and authority that he attached to his contemporary experiences as a principal.

In Holloway and Jefferson's (2010) method, each participant is interviewed twice (at least), with the second interview occurring about a week after the first, and after the first interview has undergone a preliminary analysis for contradictions, tensions, elisions, and incoherences. The purpose of the second interview is to allow the researcher to return to the scene of these tensions, eliciting more stories, or to explore topics that are notable in their absence during the first interview. In practice, the follow-up interview proved very difficult to carry out. I had overestimated the how much free time the participants in my study might have—it was difficult to secure one interview, let alone two in the same brief time period. However, I was also spending unstructured time with the participants and having casual conversations with them, so I was constantly collecting stories and subjecting them to preliminary analysis. In most cases, I had already gotten to know the participants by the time I interviewed them. I was able to bring my analysis of these conversations and observations to my interviews and access some of the undefended responses that Holloway and Jefferson aim for in their follow-up interviews. I also used my observations of events and meetings in my interview questions, framing follow-up questions around what I'd noticed the participants doing or saying. By bringing my observations to the interview, I

injected students' narratives with layers of interpretation, thus encouraging them to encounter their own narratives in a new way.

Documents, policies, and artifacts. I often included analyses of key policies in my contextualization of a particular scene. Taking a critical policy analysis approach to policies, I included in this category of data not only traditional, authoritative texts designed to convey decisions and directions, but a range of texts, practices, and concepts: social constructions that are inherently political (Winton, 2013). Critical policy analysis attempts to reveal the ways that policy works to perpetuate inequality, an approach that requires understanding policy as active. According to Lindsay Prior (2012) documents do not simply "contain" things (i.e., information) — rather they "do" things. Prior argues that the analysis of documents has commonly favoured content analysis over analyses of how documents function, and thus, her concerns mirror the concerns of critical policy analysts. While documents are not always policies; and policies are not always encoded as traditional documents, in many cases in my research there is a great deal of overlap.

While my analyses of policies and other texts and artefacts are imbedded in the larger narratives I present in each chapter, they are informed by critical policy genealogy, described by Gale (2001) as an analysis that attempts to push past conceptions of policy that are bounded by rationality. This approach to policy analysis is particularly helpful in my review of the policy texts about leadership and citizenship at Simcoe — while Gale (2001) does not specify affect as one of the dimensions or discontinuities that can complicate the rational production of policy, I think affect's unpredictability, it's resistance

to reason and consensus, and its inevitability make it an unavoidable complication, and one that deserves consideration in a genealogical policy analysis.

The texts that I included in my fieldwork and analyses range from traditional policy texts (for, example, the school board's mission statement, the student council constitution, and ministry documents outlining its approach to student voice), to student-created texts (assembly schedules, performances, and posters) to practices that had been encoded as tradition at Simcoe (assemblies, election rituals). Throughout, I paid special attention to the rhetorical and aesthetic strategies (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) that these texts use to mobilize affect.

Analysis. Earlier in the chapter, I noted that Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that ethnography is similar to everyday life in that it mirrors the interpretive lens with which we all approach the world in order to construct meaning. Ethnographers confront this dilemma of distinguishing their analytical work from everyday acts of meaning-making in a variety of ways, including the incorporation of systemic techniques to "bracket" certain kinds of meaning-making, the use of theoretical constructs for interpretation, and the practice of reflexivity. According to Spindler and Spindler (2014) "analysis is inference governed by systematic models, paradigms and theory" (p. 22). For Spindler and Spindler, the dilemma of distinguishing analysis from everyday meaning-making can be at least partly addressed by a concerted effort to "defer judgement, avoid premature interpretation and generalization and confine *ethnography* to observation of behaviour, eliciting the cultural knowledge of native, and writing 'close to the ground.'" (p. 28). They borrow from positivist traditions in their description of ethnographic analysis: "Grounded inferences are

statements of relationships between variables that stay close to the action and frequently become hypotheses for further exploration" (p 31). Heath and Street (2008) suggest that ethnographers orient their initial meaning-making away from "*why"* questions, arguing that the goals of ethnography are limited to questions of 'who, when, what, where and how." (p. 35; see also Katz, 2010).

My approach to the question of interpretation was to bring theory into dialogue with data, combining aspects of case-centred narrative analysis (Reissman, 2005) with the psychosocial, hermeneutic method of analysis put forth by Hollway and Jefferson (2010) and by Frosh (2011). Following Hollway and Jefferson's (2010), advice, my preliminary analysis began as soon as I entered the research setting. Thus, events like these chance encounters with students outside of the school became part of my data, and their analysis shaped an approach to the participants that was, in theory, both theoretically-informed and reflexive.

One of Hollway and Jefferson's principal arguments is that psychoanalytic concepts can be applied to social or cultural situations, in order to elaborate richer, more developed accounts of those situations, and that this can be done even by those lacking in psychoanalytic training. They propose a way of knowing that goes beyond "cognitive-analytic knowing" (p. 152), encompassing "affective practices" (p. 148), subjectivity, and emotion. In a new, final chapter in the second edition of their book, *Doing Qualitative Research Differently*, the authors draw on the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and countertransference to urge researchers to use their own subjectivity and emotional responses as an instrument of knowing (2010). This is captured in their approach to analysis, which calls for ongoing and recursive reflection and, disrupting the notion of the

solitary researcher/doctoral student, the support of a panel of co-interpreters. Although I lacked the benefits of a data analysis panel, I did have the advantage of conversations with my supervisor and my colleagues — often, just vocalizing my preliminary interpretations led to a new reflexive direction; other times, extensive conversations helped reveal my own affective investments.

Hollway and Jefferson link their psychosocial approach to research to the study of narratives. According to Reissman (2008), "narrative study relies on…extended accounts that are preserved and treated analytically as units, rather than fragmented into thematic categories as is customary in other forms of qualitative analysis" (p. 12). While frequently associated with interview methods, narrative analysis of an ethnographic project offers an additional benefit, as it compels the researcher to include her own notes and impressions both as narratives in their own right and as part of the network of narrative threads that make up the interpretation of a scene. In research that involves narrative, narrative is both the phenomenon or process being studied and the methodological approach adopted for analysis (and furthermore the means of representation of the research findings) (Watson, 2012). Nevertheless, as Watson notes, "Narratives should not be regarded as providing unmediated access to 'reality.' Narratives are artful constructions and analysis must be concerned with both the content of the narrative and the form of its construction" (Watson, 2012, p. 463).

The use of narrative analysis also mitigated some of the issues presented by my use of coding. I used coding as way to manage the data I had gathered, despite warnings from Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2013) that the taxonomies created through coding risk

rehearsing habitual and oppressive ways of seeing and understanding the word. I uploaded all of my notes and transcripts to a secure, cloud-based qualitative data management program called MaxQDA, and used the program to create codes within my documents. I also used codes as an organizational technique, to help me find the places where the students had mentioned an event, person, concept, or object, even in passing (for example, Mr. Barney, the leadership retreat, a cancelled homecoming dance, bank accounts, benevolence). I was able to contextualize narratives and add depth to my interpretations; moreover, coding allowed me to trace the circulation of affect across and within the interconnected narratives that structured my analysis. This aligns with Watson's suggestion that "analyzing narratives is not about decontextualizing data but about treating the narrative as a (more or less) coherent whole" (Watson, 2012, p. 463). Furthermore, many of my codes and memos were specifically oriented toward the incoherences and incongruities that arose between the affective and intersubjective moments I had recorded and the theoretical concepts I used to think about them.

From the field to the page: Writing

My decision to focus my analysis on narrative cases, introduced in vignettes at the beginning of each chapter, highlights the central role of writing in ethnographic research. Writing is how ethnographers demonstrate the trustworthiness of their interpretations (Erickson, 1984); however, because the meaning of "trustworthiness" (having its etymological origins in the worth *truth*) is subject to epistemological debate, so is the question of how researchers should use writing in ethnography. Smith and Sparkes (2008, cited in Watson, 2012) distinguish story analysts from storytellers. Story analysts, they

claim, use "analytical procedures, strategies and techniques in order to abstractly scrutinize, explain and think about" a story's features (p. 462). Ethnographic researchers must often hedge against accusations of "mere storytelling", as Anderson suggests (1989, p. 252); however, I contend that ethnography can also make space for the researcher as storyteller.

Ethnographic writing mimics the method: it envelops the reader in the setting and introduces the research questions and the research participants as vital and alive, highlighting the ethnographer's authorial presence and evoking an aesthetic response in the reader. And ultimately, the ethnography *is* the account of the research (Humphreys & Watson, 2009). Ethnographies can be powerful because they ask the reader to become invested in the lives of the research participants, just as ethnographic research asks the researcher to become invested in the lives of those real people who are at the centre of the research. But the experience of immersion creates challenges for writing. As ethnographers have moved from naturalistic or realist depictions of their research, a new set of questions has emerged. What considerations should researchers make for their own voices in ethnographic writing? In other words, how do ethnographic researchers write their own characters into the story? What is the line between fiction and research, between the literary and the scientific (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983)?

These questions were at the forefront of a shift in ethnography toward the literary, led by anthropologists James Clifford and George Marcus (1986). Clifford points to earlier methodological claims of "transparency of representation and immediacy of experience" to account for the fact that issues around writing were absent from methodological debates about ethnography (Clifford, 1986, p. 3). The turn to the literary—the increased focus on

text, narrative, and rhetoric—accompanied ethnography's shift toward a research product that highlights rather than conceals the constructed-ness of any account of culture or society. In proposing ethnography as an artistic genre Clifford (1986; 1988) carries the issues of representation and partiality through to the reader:

> Even the best ethnographic texts—serious, true fictions—are systems, or economies, of truth. Power and history work through them, in ways their authors cannot fully control. … Ethnographic truths are thus inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete. This point is now widely asserted… But once accepted and built into ethnographic art, a rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representational tact. (Clifford, 1986, p. 7)

Ruth Behar, also an anthropologist, highlights the literary by suggesting that the "method of ethnography is inseparable from the genre of ethnography," (Behar, 2007, p. 148); that is, the characteristics of ethnographic research—the immersion in another's story combined with the fact of the researcher's partiality—demand a written product that emphasize these. Ruth Behar takes the additional—and provocative—step of referring to the elements of ethnographic writing in literary terms: She urges ethnographers to introduce the setting, the key protagonists, and the narrative voices that animate the ethnographer's "story" (p. 148), while being careful to establish a "counterpoint" between the ethnographer's voice and the voices of the participants. Using literary terms to refer to the real people and places of ethnographic research further elevates its constructed-ness—

highlighting the inventive and the interpretive nature of ethnography in a way that many researchers may find discomfiting.

These considerations influenced my decision to structure my chapters around vignettes: writerly descriptions of important moments from my fieldwork that were both extra-ordinary, in that they were flashpoints for larger discussions or lingering affects, and ordinary, in that they involved the mundane aspects of everyday life in a student council. Vignettes have been used by many ethnographers as an expository strategy — to immerse the reader in the ethnographic scene; and to illustrate "a theoretical concept, a dilemma", or the social or political context within which the research is situated (McCready, 2010). I chose particular moments to highlight in these chapter-opening vignettes because, in my view, they encapsulated the complexity and the richness of the moments I analysed. In all cases, I chose and wrote the vignette scenes after I had completed the analysis of the data relating to that moment and drafted the chapter. My analysis of these moments and other narrative elements in my dissertation reflects Watson's notion of the researcher as "story analyst"; however, the introductory vignettes that introduce each of these chapters suggest the complementary notion of the researcher as storyteller. In addition to providing context, the "storytelling" aesthetic I used in the opening vignettes invites readers to put the study in context and to judge for themselves the "typical"-ness of the setting and how they might translate from the particularities of Simcoe Secondary School to another setting. By setting these vignettes apart from the text, and in using a more authorial hand, I immerse the reader in the scene while making visible its constructedness.

According to Erickson (1984), making the research process visible through writing invites the reader to engage in close scrutiny and take on the role of co-analyst — a process

that functions to validate the research. In this method of validation, where trustworthiness replaces an objective truth, trustworthiness is revealed as a matter of persuasion (Sandelowski, 1993) rather than a matter of objective truth. Rich, finely-rendered, "dense" data, which comes from multiple sources, helps the reader understand the likelihoods and unlikelihood of explanations.

Conclusion

Ethnography can paint a detailed, comprehensive picture of the relational world of the school. It can reveal undercurrents, cracks, and fissures that might otherwise be obscured, and it can enliven the scene of theory for its reader. It is a method which is rich with affective intensity. But this can also pose challenges for the researchers, especially those interested in studying familiar settings, as they encounter traces of their own histories in the research site. Moreover, ethnographers (and other qualitative researchers) must find ways to account for the constructed-ness of their data and their interpretations. In the chapters that follow this one, my reflexive stance is driven by my attention to these issues.

Chapter 5.

The Young Citizen: Between Fantasy and Practice

It was Christmas card kind of afternoon: big, fat snowflakes were gently falling, lingering on jackets, backpacks, and eyelashes, and it wasn't yet too cold to take pleasure in them. I waited with my car outside the apartment complex where Julia and Safiya both lived. The student council members were busy shuttling armload after armload of toys from one of the apartments into my car. The students were exuberant: the toys were the fruits of their very successful fundraiser and were soon to be delivered to Glencrest House, a pediatric palliative care center. Soon, my car was full of giant teddy bears, gingerbread house making kits, craft supplies and bright plastic baby toys. There wasn't any room for passengers, but this pleased the students — it was evidence of their good citizenship, their care for the dying children of Glencrest House, their concern for their arrested futures.

The Glencrest fundraiser was preceded by another citizenship project, one that I spearheaded and that ended up in failure. Planning my dissertation research, I was eager to find ways to increase its likelihood of getting approved by the school board's ethics committee and its appeal to the teachers, administrators and students who would become its participants. In my research about the provincial policies and programs in place to support student voice initiatives, I discovered that the Ministry of Education offered a grant—called the SpeakUP grant—to student councils and other student groups. Grant winners received up to $2500 to plan and execute a project, event, or campaign designed to increase "student voice" in their schools or communities. I decided that to increase the benefits of participation in my project, I would offer to help the student participants in my research project apply for a

SpeakUP grant. Once I began talking with staff at the school, I found that both the principal, Mr. Barney, and the staff advisor, Mr. Malone, held some social justice-oriented aspirations for the student council, even if these were ill-defined and ad-hoc. Their interest in the broader social goals of the SpeakUP grant seemed to confirm that it was a good fit for the school and the student council.

The SpeakUP grant became the centerpiece of my pitch to the school board, the administration, the teachers, and the students I hoped to work with. In my introductory meetings with the principal and the student council, everyone seemed enthusiastic about it. The newly elected council was enticed by the promise of cash, and the teachers seemed pleased with the idea of a student council project that was oriented toward something different — in other words, something serious. Months later, however, when I reintroduced the SpeakUP grant to the student council, the response was, at best, tepid. Over the next six weeks, I gently prodded the student council to get on board with the SpeakUP grant, sending reminders over email and social media, and bringing it up at meetings. They responded with polite deferrals but did not manage to get past the initial brainstorming phases of the SpeakUP grant application, their participation seemingly stalled by the requirements of the grant: that the project be one that benefited students like them. One student, Safiya, dismissed all the suggestions as "boring, boring, boring, boring, boring".

A few weeks after I started working with the student council on the SpeakUp grant, the student council launched the Glencrest House fundraiser. The fundraiser ran through the holiday season spirit week, and council members went from classroom to classroom, collecting change from their classmates and their teachers. Planning and fundraising for Glencrest House consumed the student council for close to two weeks. On the last day, the

council emptied the jars that had held the coins and revelled in the fact that they had raised more than six hundred dollars. Soon, they turned their full attention to shopping for toys to donate to the residents of Glencrest House. The foreclosed futures of the terminally-ill children in Glencrest house captured the Simcoe students' collective attention; the precarious futures that they faced as citizens and the material problems that maintained this precarity were no match for the intimate and personal tragedy of the dying child.

In this chapter I develop a theory of youth and citizenship that takes into account the fantasy life of citizenship and examines what young people stand in for in discourse and practice around citizenship and the future. I argue that what policy and educational discourse imagines as youth citizenship is at odds with what the practice of citizenship actually looks like for young people. What accounts for this tension? The chapter takes the failure of the SpeakUP grant and the wild success of the Glencrest fundraiser as a narrative that highlights tensions around youth citizenship (and how it is theorized and enacted). Importantly, this tension was also built into my commitment to helping the students with the SpeakUP grant: the grant was grounded in the very assumptions about young people, citizenship, and the state that I call into question in my project. As a citizen, I share in the collective fantasy of citizenship and the state; thus, the fantasy life of citizenship is the context for my study. The chapter follows the figure of the young citizen through my fieldwork—from my analysis of documents about student voice and citizenship, to my interactions with students and staff at Simcoe Secondary, and finally, to the heart of my research methodology and project design. At the core of the chapter is a tension around the Child that is imagined by our political culture: an impossible child citizen who, to satisfy the

demands of the adults around her, is constructed as both *infantile* and *mature* at the same time.

Youth and crises of citizenship

Student councils' relationship to citizenship and citizenship education is bound to the recurring "crises of citizenship" that drive cyclical educational policy reforms. Young people's citizenship is often at the centre of "alleged crises of citizenship" (Biesta & Lawy, 2006), partly because public education is commonly held accountable for any perceived "decline in democracy" (Menezes, 2017, p. 18). A number of scholars (Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Menezes, 2017; Berlant, 1998) suggest that these crises are spurious or at least overwrought. In my discussion outlining the recent historical context for developments in student leadership and student councils, I suggested that these crises are better understood in the context of political, social or ideological discourse. Rather than pointing to evidence of failures in education or parenting then, concerns or moral panics around a generation of young people's suitability for or enactment of citizenship often point to anxiety about broader social or political changes. By looking at contemporary policies and programming about young people's citizenship and leadership in the broader social and political context, we can understand more fully how ideas about youth and their citizenship are linked with discursive and material structures of the adult world.

Conversely, understanding the tensions that constitute constructions of young people's citizenship can expose the affective underpinnings that both strain and propel ideas about youth citizenship. In this analysis, then, citizenship might be better understood as a set of relations: relations between individuals and collectives, and also between state (and its

sanctions and protections) and the feelings that it engenders in its citizens: belonging, security, containment, but also anxiety and disappointment.

Citizenship, then, is more than the explicit or tacit exchange of rights, provisions, or protections for compliance with and participation in the ongoing building and re-building of democratic institutions. Rather, it is underscored by emotional investments; a network of feelings reaching into the past and into the future — these underpin even the most transactional approaches to understanding citizenship and are marked by "unresolved (un-recognized) conflicts from earlier situations. […] There is, in other words, a large degree of imagination, what psychoanalysts call fantasy, at play in the work of the citizen" (Garrett, 2016, p. 53). If the work of citizenship is characterized by fantasies or feelings that are anchored in our pasts and our imagined futures, then the question becomes: how do these affective intensities solidify as practices, habits, and traditions? And how might we read the idea of "becoming" citizen in the context of this sedimentation of affects? Frosh (2003) asks: "What emotions and fantasies insert themselves into the process of being so that citizenship is not an abstract notion […] but instead contains something material and 'real' inside it?" (p. 62). He suggests that for citizenship to be understood beyond its transactional pragmatics, it must "embrace this space of feeling and fantasy, this realm of the subjective, of what might properly be termed the *investments* which human subjects accrue towards their social world" (Frosh, 2003, p. 62). Frosh concedes that citizenship does require the behaviours that accompany pragmatic conceptions of citizenship; however, it also demands that citizens invest themselves in—or perhaps, allow themselves to become invested in—the constellation of relations that make up society and its institutions. The relation between the individual and society is fraught with

contradictions—society both works against the individual by thwarting her desires and at the same time, uses these desires to function in a way that serves the individual's aims for self-preservation. Even the most mundane of daily relationships between individuals and the social world around them operate based on this principle: Garrett (2017) provides the example of the rules of the road to illustrate this. For Frosh, interdependent relationship means that "citizenship can only be a compromise, a balance between what one might 'truly' desire (to explode all possible constraints) and the limits of what can be allowed if life is to go on" (p. 67). The tensions between the individual and the collective then, are stabilized by the affective relations that make up citizenship.

The introduction of children into the scene of citizenship complicates this already complex set of relations. The relationships between young people and adults (both in practice and in theory) are already complicated by emotional and physical dependencies, fantasies and desires. For the most part, theories of youth citizenship underpin, in some way, the emotional dynamics that are at play even within the most pragmatic or transactional approaches to citizenship. However, these dynamics are important for understanding who the child citizen is, and how she fits into the affective world of citizenship. Understanding the emotional demands of citizenship—the ways that fantasy and feelings complicate the relationships that make up citizenship—can offer new ways of thinking about young people's political lives.

Young people as "mature" citizens

What kind of citizens should young people be? What kind of citizens *can* they be? How do children and young people fit into the relational scene of citizenship? Many

contemporary scholars of youth and citizenship (Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Fielding & Moss, 2011, Fielding, 2004; Menezes, 2017) reject the notion that young people, in public school, are citizens-in-the-making (Marshall, 1950), claiming instead that young people should be regarded as full citizens, just as adults are. Menezes (2017) writes that the affordance of non-citizen or part-citizen status upon children implies an assumption that children and youth are "ignorant, immature, or unprepared for citizenship" (p. 18) and that this allows educators and policy makers to design citizenship programming that skirts uncomfortable or difficult issues related to democracy, politics, and the social and economic life of the nation.

Menezes is not alone in calling for an approach to youth citizenship that "recognizes children and youth as citizens in their own right." (p. 18); it is a position taken up by a number of scholars working in this field (Archard, 2004; Raby, 2008; Westheimer, 2015). These scholars argue that a "caretaker" approach to young people's citizenship, in which young people are prevented from making choices in order to protect the futurity of their citizenship, is incompatible with a *participatory* approach to youth citizenship (Raby, 2008; Westheimer, 2015) or a social justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer, 2015). In other words, these scholars argue for a *mature* young citizen—one who is empowered to enact a full spectrum of citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Our society has often demonstrated a commitment to the paternalistic protection of children and youth—even if we often fail to fulfil our commitments. So, the push in education policy, and in other policy areas, to put programming in place (for example, youth consultations (Jessop, 2009) and student participation in school improvement planning (Mitra, 2004)) that denies this developmentalist foundation is puzzling. In her

discussion of the call for young people's voices in political life in Scotland, Sharon Jessop (2009) describes this "unresolved contradiction" between a view of young people that gives "gives due regard to the development or of the incompleteness of children" and an approach to their citizenship that maintains that "children are to be considered not citizens of the future but citizens *now*" (p. 980). Many areas of education and youth service purport put mechanisms in place that aim to protect young people by marking them as separate and different from adults — as needing protection. What makes the field of citizenship different?

Children and youth—if they are lucky—develop and prepare for life in the world (including citizenship) within the protective spheres of family, caring schools and classrooms, and other supportive relationships. Maturing—growing up—is the task of childhood and adolescence. To suggest that young people are always already mature and prepared for citizenship, that is, always already equipped to shoulder the obligations associated with citizenship's rights—risks devaluing these important foundations of citizenship. Jessop (2009) cautions of the risk to young people's political futurity when responsibility for social issues is incorporated into young people's citizenship before they have had a chance to develop, grow into, and learn about themselves and the world. The notion that young people's citizenship should be regarded by the state in the same way as adults', then, is complicated by adults' collective responsibility for young people. Jessop's argument draws on Arendt's (1958) assertion that adults have a responsibility to preserve young people's newness (by protecting them from the public realm) until they are equipped with the knowledge and maturity to renew the world they inherit, rather than continue on the same path as previous generations. For Arendt, this renewal is at the heart

of a humane public, political life, and it underpins her contentious notion that young people should remain in the "private" realm of the family and the school, rather than being invited or pushed into the public world of political life.

Arendt (1958) takes aim at the progressive educationalists from her time whose aims anticipated those of proponents of "full" citizenship for young people today, that is, those who seem to privilege young people's participation in the public realm over the protection of their "newness." In her essay about the "Little Rock Nine,"(1959) about the African American high school students who were the first to desegregate Central Little Rock High school in the late 1950s, Arendt is critical of the state's decision to put young people at the centre of the significant political eruptions developing around the civil rights movement. She argues that this move forced young people into the public realm, burdening them with the responsibility for bearing the painful conflicts arising from desegregation — conflicts which are, in her view, rightfully adults' to bear. Bringing this argument into conversation with my contention that citizenship is best understood as a complex set of affective relations, I read in Arendt's critique a tension around young people's political identities; their sense of themselves as citizens. The exposure to the public realm, which Arendt exemplifies quite explicitly in "Reflections on Little Rock" and more generally in her essay, "The crisis in Education," can also be understood as denying young people the chance to develop a "new" political identity independently of the "old", established order.

How do young people develop a political identity that prepares them for the task of renewal, and what might this proto-political identity look like? And where does it fit in relation to the public, political sphere imagined by Arendt? My reading of Lauren Berlant's

figure of the "infantile citizen," (1997) reimagines this figure within the context of Arendt's theories about the power and vulnerability of young people's newness.

The infantile citizen

Lauren Berlant (1997) suggests that one of the ways we survive the compromises that citizenship and national identity demand of us is through the figure of the infantile citizen. Unspoiled by cynicism; innocent to the disappointments of citizenship and the failures of the state to live up to its imagined capacity to contain anxieties about belonging and security, the infantile citizen occupies a space of "possibility that transcends the fractures and hierarchies of national life" (Berlant, 1997, p 28). For the infantile citizen, neither national identity nor citizenship itself represent the kind of compromise between one's true desires and the limits of what is possible in a social world that Frosh (2003) describes. The infantile citizen's earnest, childlike naiveté presents a paradox: it is regarded as "a political subjectivity based on the suppression of critical knowledge," a debasement of citizenship to mere default social membership or "possession of a national character" (p. 28). Berlant's examples make it clear that while adults can be infantile citizens — and many are — the figure of the political child is the archetypical infantile citizen. Her essay takes as its object TV and film representations of pilgrimages to Washington, D.C.: journeys that epitomize the development of a national political identity. In most of her examples, the political pilgrims are young people or people who take on the futurity of youth through their status as sons or daughters.

These citizens' orientation to the state is one of innocence; the infantile citizen's futurity, read as vulnerability, can usurp contemporary crises by transfiguring into a

patriotism that both sustains and reveals (to the mature citizen) the fantasy of the state. It is central to a narrative of citizenship that sustains an investment in an *ideal* nation—its uncritical-ness, then, is foundational in a "strong and enduring belief … in a polity that organizes its public sphere around a commitment to making a world that could sustain an idealized infantile citizen" (p. 27). Berlant notes a conflict in the understanding of national identity, "between a patriotic view of national identity, which seeks to use identification with the *ideal (my italics)* nation to trump or subsume all other notions of personhood, and a view … in which citizenship talk takes as its main subject the unequal material conditions of economic, social, and political struggle and survival" (p. 27). The heart of the Canadian national fantasy rests with ideas around cultural diversity, pluralism, and recognition. This political fantasy, though, is vulnerable to the reality of inequality and the failures of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the infantile citizen's potentiality holds together the promise that participation in citizenship and democracy will yield solutions to the conflicts and tensions that are faced by the state and its citizens. Thus, this particularly Canadian fantasy is held together more than anywhere through the national project of mass compulsory schooling, where civic education often takes the form of participation in "diversity" events and exposure, via curricular materials, to diverse bodies (Bickmore, 2005; Ferguson, 2011). The kind of proto-citizenship that the infantile citizen represents is a citizenship grounded in a fantasy of the state. While Berlant describes it as patriotic and in reference to an ideal nation, I contend (using Arendt's notions of private and public) that this is also a private citizenship, focused on fantasies about the state and rooted in the youthful narcissism of omnipotence.

The infantile person's naiveté originates in another infantile characteristic: omnipotence. Adam Phillips captures this connection between a fantasy of omnipotence and something that appears in the political realm as naiveté. He writes, "we are born in turbulent love with the world, which is assumed to be made for us, of a piece with our wishes…" (Phillips, 1998, p. 39). For the infantile citizen, this translates into both patriotic attachment to the state and to national identity, but also to a kind of magical thinking**.** This is the fantasy, grounded in the young person's sense of omnipotence, that one's own thoughts or desires have significant influence over events that are actually well outside one's sphere of influence: for example, that a blizzard might be brought about by wishes for a snow day, or that a parent's illness might be the result of disobedience. In terms of political life and Berlant's infantile citizen, this might be reflected in the infantile citizen's "utopian political identification" — her or his sense of importance in a political world that, in turn, rewards and encourages this fantasy. Young people, if they are lucky, if they are given the opportunity to develop in what Arendt might describe as the private realm, do not need to subject these kinds of utopian fantasies to the reality test of fiscal pragmatism or communal life. Inheriting this characteristic, the infantile citizen can relish her or his naiveté, allowing it to become a strength rather than a weakness. Berlant writes:

> as it is, citizen adults have learned to "forget" or to render as impractical, naive, or childish their utopian political identifications in order to be politically happy and economically functional. Confronting the tension between utopia and history, the infantile citizen's stubborn naivete gives her/him enormous power to unsettle, expose, and reframe the machinery of national life (1997, p. 28).

Viewed through the lens of Arendt's theories about the vulnerability of children's newness and its protection from public life, the infantile citizen's naiveté takes on a new significance: it becomes the precursor to, or the foundation of the renewal by which Arendt claims young people can save the world from ruin (Arendt, 1958).

The infantile citizens in Berlant's examples are, of course, fictional — stand-ins for anxieties about the citizenship in changing political times. However, this figure can be read into contemporary iterations of youth citizenship as they appear in policy and educational programming. Rather than cultivating young people's citizenship as "infantile", i.e., as naive and grounded in utopian fantasies, contemporary discourse about young people's citizenship constructs a "mature" citizen; one who relinquishes the naiveté of the infantile by approaching citizenship with a critical or even cynical lens. This is a young citizen who recognizes the ways that the "system" does *not* work, one who is keenly aware of the ways that the state and its systems fail to live up to their fantastical promises. But as Berlant shows, the fantasy of the state also requires the unbridled optimism and omnipotence fantasies of the infantile citizen to support its impossibilities.

In practice, then, the construct of youth citizenship asks for a paradoxical young citizen. It asks the young person, in other words, the infantile citizen, to embody the impossibilities of citizenship and national fantasies which drive the mature citizen into paralyzed cynical apathy (Berlant, 1997); and at the same time, it wants a young citizen who will follow along the path of "mature," critically engaged citizenship. Britzman, citing Bernfield, argues that the adult world "cannot tolerate the immature learner—its mistakes, fantasies, accidents, and detours—for the immature learner reminds adults of their former

selves and present failings" (1998, p. 25). Adults cannot tolerate the infantile citizen since the infantile citizen reminds adults of their "former self and present failings"; and so, acting under the umbrella of the public, adult world of policy-making, adults invite young people into the critical world of mature citizenship with programming and policy that encourages them to take on the worn-in failings of the state. However, since it is infantile citizenship that allows the national fantasy to persist, the young citizen is caught in a bind**.** The adult citizen proponent of youth citizenship is also stuck wanting a young citizen who is both mature enough to allow the adult citizen to repudiate her immature self; and immature enough to hold the impossibilities of national fantasy. Thus, "student voice" and "youth citizenship" can be understood as ambivalent projects, stuck in a tension between the demand for young citizens to exercise a mature citizenship and the need for young people to serve as a proxy for the infantile citizenship that sustains the fantasy of the state. Young people's utopian political identifications are both repudiated by adults as naive and at the same time, desired as a mechanism for continuing to believe in the state's capacity to contain and organize collective life.

Citizenship and the SpeakUP grant

The tensions between "infantile citizenship" and mature citizenship played out repeatedly during my fieldwork — in a way, it became an organizing feature of the relationships between students and staff members and amongst these groups as well. Unlike some other tensions (see chapter six), it did not make itself known in the form of yelling matches or tearful confessions: the brief moment of conflict between Ms. Clarke and Dina and Zahra, about the Snoop Dog t-shirt, is an example of this quiet

tension. Nevertheless, the ambivalence about what kind of citizenship young people should enact, and for whom and towards what their citizenship was oriented complicated the terrain of leadership and youth citizenship at Simcoe. The introduction of the SpeakUp Grant added additional layers of complexity: creating a link to the state outside of school, it reified a reach into the public sphere; and since its introduction at Simcoe originated with my research project, my own desires and ambivalences became part of the scene. In the sections that follow, I describe my attempt in my fieldwork to engage with and sometimes interfere with the world of youth citizenship; and from this vantage point, I narrate a young citizen who is beset by contradictions.

The speakUp grant as a citizenship project

At the time of my fieldwork, the SpeakUp grant was in its third annual iteration. It was a flagship initiative of the Ontario Ministry of Education's Student Voice office, and it offered grants of either $1000 or $2500 to groups of students (clubs, whole classes, or other organizations) in Ontario middle or high schools to plan and execute a project to "address the ideas and the challenges of the students in [their] schools" (Government of Ontario, 2017). While the aims of the grant appear open-ended, the program is actually closely linked to the political aims of the ministry of education: the projects designed by the students must align with one of four of the Ministry's "areas of focus": "achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being, and enhancing public confidence" (Government of Ontario, 2017).

The grant's PR materials, which I describe in more detail below, make gestures toward both the rights and obligations of citizenship, operating within the narrative of student voice and participatory citizenship. However, the materials also point to the tension I have described above, promoting the young citizen as a critical, politically astute, mature citizen and at the same time, as an optimistic patriot, innocent to the ways that the state grinds against the very political acumen that it appears to promote. This is a contradiction that repeated itself throughout my fieldwork — it was enacted not just in policy and programming but by the staff and students at Simcoe.

My own actions also repeated this contradiction. I felt this initially as I read through the SpeakUP grant PR materials with the students one afternoon, early in my campaign to get the students on board with the project. I noticed the students' affects shift as the text I read shifted from uplifting messages of empowerment to more difficult questions of social exclusion and oppression. A close reading of the rhetorical strategies employed in these documents reveals how programs like the SpeakUP grant contribute to the production of a certain kind of youth citizenship — one that is often at odds with other orientations to youth citizenship, including young people's own political identifications.

The documents I shared with the council were part of an online application package outlining the reasons for applying for a SpeakUP grant, as well as the steps required for a successful application. By employing the grammatical second person, with phrases like "you are experts in student experience," and assurances that "your ideas can make your school, community, and Ontario's education system even better," the SpeakUP application guide creates a direct line of communication between the adult world of policy-making and the young people reading the document. The instructions go on to encourage applicants to

review Ministry and board improvement plans while designing their projects: “As a team, develop a list of ideas or challenges that you may want to address with a speakUp project. Be sure to reference the Areas of Focus from the application landing page.” Later, the guidelines remind students to consider representation and whose voice is being heard: “Will pursuing this cause any one person or group of people in our school community discomfort or upset? Is there group of students, in particular, that this idea could impact? If yes, how will we continue to consider their ideas/challenges moving forward?” These suggestions are pedagogical, with a focus on project planning strategies. However, the materials make clear that this is also citizenship project which aims to bring its participants closer to a mature version of citizenship by encouraging participants to approach the project with an eye to equity and social justice. This focus is particularly evident in the list of example projects provided: this list of “consciousness-raising” activities like workshops and seminars (examples below) helps to define “student voice” and “students’ needs” as needs related to structural/social inequality.

Previous SpeakUP grant examples:

- Organized a district-wide Indigenous Festival bringing the Native community together.
- Learned about the benefits of locally produced food by growing vegetables and flowers in school gardens.
- Hosted a full-day equity conference to engage students and promote equity in education. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017)

By linking young people's ideas (Ministry of Education, 2017) with the notions of obligation to the Other and equity, the program aligns itself with a view of mature citizenship championed by proponents of student voice and critical youth citizenship. This asks the student participants to think of the systemic failures of state and its institutions; to engage with public political problems like equity in education and food distribution systems (as suggested by the examples above). This translates into the skepticism or even the cynicism of "mature" citizenship. At the same time, the grant asks participants to take a patriotic, utopian, and ultimately naive approach. In requiring that their citizenship work be routed through its policy missives (the Ministry "Areas of Focus", for example), the grant asks participants to orient their political identifications toward the state and its (fantastical) commitments. To succeed in this version of youth citizenship, then, young people must navigate the terrain between mature cynicism and the naive patriotism of the infantile citizen.

Elsewhere on the student voice section of the ministry's website, youth citizenship is presented as fresh and optimistic, further aligning student voice with the "infantile citizen." One of the ministry's key student voice initiatives is the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC), which meets annually to craft a message to deliver to the minister of education. Each year (the MSAC has been running for 4 years) the product of this two-day workshop is a white-board animation graphic, in a style popularized by the Royal Society for the Arts Animate series and TED talks. This genre tends to focus on topics like social innovation, behavior change, communities, and social justice, generally presented through a progressive or even a radical lens (I am using the term radical pretty liberally here!). I read this genre as an optimistic one: while the animations often expose

the failings of the contemporary political or social context, they are full of promise and potentiality—they are oriented toward a hopeful future. By aligning with this genre in its PR materials, the ministry imbues its own student voice programs and policy work with this sense of potentiality. The transfiguration of students' voices into whiteboard animation graphics takes place at the hands of adult PR professionals, who repackage the proceedings of these consultation sessions into a product that gleams with the kind of naivete and eagerness that Berlant associates with the infantile citizen. The recommendations and demands that the child members of these consultation panels make are thus processed and packaged in this way by the very system that they are meant to critique. Through this circular process, the national fantasy of a democratic "system [that] works" (Berlant, 1997) is transposed onto the potentiality of youths' citizenship.

Ideal youth citizenship: a paradox

The paradoxical construction of young people's citizenship in policy and programming ran parallel to the ways staff and students imagined and enacted their roles as citizens at Simcoe. Rereading my fieldnotes, I noticed that they are marked by tensions between the youthful naiveté and the critical gaze of mature citizenship. Appearing in my notes as a series of disappointments and frustrations, these tensions also reflect my own identification with, and ambivalence about, the contradictory meanings of youth citizenship. As I began my fieldwork, I had many conversations with students, teachers, and administrators about the SpeakUP grant. Their varying responses to the promise of such a project offer a way to understand the relationship between adults' citizenship and the conflicting ways that young people's citizenship is constructed through student voice

and youth citizenship policies and programming. The excerpt below, from my fieldnotes, describes my early interactions with the 2016/2017 student council about the SpeakUP grant.

> *Yesterday, I received a message from Safiya [student council member] alerting me to the student council meeting. […] In her text, she asks if I can help them apply for the student council grant—she was enthusiastic about it before [the welcome to grade 9 day], enterprising and almost crafty, so I'm relieved that she's on board, like she's on my team somehow. Researching it before the meeting I'm a little dismayed to find that there is no information about this year's grant online, just information from previous years. The applications aren't open yet, that or—and this is my fear—the program won't be running again this year. I am worried about bailing on the students, disappointing them—I'm worried that I won't be able to deliver on my side of the bargain. Later, Safiya texts me with the location of the meeting, and again, I'm pleased and relieved. […] I've brought chips and Oreos to the meeting, billing them as a "welcome back" treat, to everyone's delight, even though Malone groans that I'm spoiling them. (field notes, September).*

In this excerpt, my fieldnotes focus on Safiya's enthusiasm, which contrasts with my concern—originating from my experience with the ad hoc nature of many progressive government programs—that the state, and my association with it, will end up being a let down to the students. It appears that I *need* Safiya's (or other students') enthusiasm to get through the anxiety about whether the grant will be offered again this year—and I rewarded and encouraged it with junk food offerings. Viewed through the lens of Berlant's

notion of infantile citizenship, it seems as though the Safiya's optimism, which might be read as naiveté, sustains a fantasy of citizenship. Reflecting on my fieldnotes from this moment, I recognized that my anxiety about the state's commitment to promises such as those made through the SpeakUP grant had become conflated with my anxiety that the students would not get on board with my research project. A reassurance about the students' enthusiasm — *their* investment in the project was (at this point) what allowed me to survive my anxiety about the potential for disappointment on the part of the state. A few weeks later, another encounter rattled my confidence in the speakUP grant:

> *Chatting with [a teacher] in the sun during a moment of free time at camp [a leadership retreat]—I mention the speakUP grant, that I was hoping to help the students apply for it. I'm always trying to talk up my project in situations like these, it seems. She looks a little concerned or perturbed, and warns me that I should check with Erin Bloomfield, one of the guidance counselors, about whether she is doing anything for the grant this year. I'm caught off guard, a panic creeps in—the last thing I want to do is be in competition with another group at the school. Also, a little confused: Ms. Bloomfield isn't someone I've seen working with any of the student leadership or student voice kinds of groups. Am I so out of the loop? I'm maybe even a little paranoid about stepping on toes, making myself into a nuisance. The teacher explains it so casually, like I should've known or guessed it: students don't really apply for these grants, teachers do, and attach students' names to them—with the students' permission. I'm appalled by the brazenness of this—it feels like straight up fraud. I don't express this to the teacher: instead I'm like, "Oh yes, of course, of course" as if it is obvious that it has to be that way. (field notes, October)*

Later, reflecting upon this encounter, I recognized a secondary reaction to this new piece of information: in addition to feeling outraged at the way this student voice program had been so casually co-opted by adults, my not-quite-genuine naiveté suggests an ambivalence about this news. The discovery that, at least in this case, student voice appeared to be entirely routed through adults aligns with a narrative that is common or even foundational in student voice literature: that young people are frequently tokenized in policy and decision making (Hart, 1992). The apparent co-opting of the speakUP grant by adults appears to be an excellent example of this. It points to a caretaker approach to youth citizenship (Raby, 2008) — one that holds that young people are not sufficiently developed or mature to make decisions in their own best interests. But it also suggests a more complicated affective response to the naive omnipotence of programs like the SpeakUP grant, a cynicism about youth citizenship, even a disdain for utopian optimism.

This charade, like my conflation of anxiety about the state upholding its promises with the students' interest in my research project, exemplifies a situation in which adult citizens can project their fantasies about citizenship onto the idea or the practice of youth citizenship. This strategy is identified by Anna Freud as "altruistic surrender: the mechanism which somehow allows the ego to live through the other, to find "some proxy in the outside world to serve as a repository" (Freud, 1966/1936, p. 142). In educational settings, policies and programs (like the SpeakUP grant) can serve as a proxy for the adult's ego, through which it can find the gratification that adult life prohibits (Britzman, 1998). In other words, student voice activities like the SpeakUp grant may permit adults to enjoy the naïve optimism of the infantile citizen as a utopian escape from the grind of public life; a

retreat into a more private world of childhood, without having to actually take up this political identification themselves. However, when this strategy is tested or challenged, as it was when the teacher explained that teachers applied for grants on students' behalf, the tensions between mature and infantile approaches to citizenship are revealed. In the case of the SpeakUP grant, this became clear when I emailed Ms. Bloomfield to make sure that I wasn't encroaching on her grant-getting turf. I learned that she had never heard of the speakUP grant, and that she wasn't involved in any kind of student-group grants. The teacher I was spoke with in the conversation above may have been generalizing across schools or may have been thinking of a different teacher or program (In fact, funding for in-school student clubs was sometimes applied for by teachers, who created the clubs and applied on behalf of students) . But her warning contained within it an important narrative about students' autonomy and their capacity to go through the process of applying for a grant. In implying that it's obvious that students don't apply for grants on their own behalf, the teacher's comments align with a cynical narrative that contradicts, or corrects, the infantile attachment to the idea that "the system works!" (Berlant, 1997, p. 28). Her narrative chafes against the SpeakUP grant's progressiveness — her discouraging words were directed at me, a representative of that orientation toward youth citizenship. In a way, this felt like having a fantasy exposed—the teacher's warning threatened to reveal the fantasy of youth citizenship as a project that serves the ego.

In another example of the complex relation between adults' engagement with an infantile orientation to political life and young people's enactment of it, Mr. Malone, the student council advisor, described his aims for the student council. In this conversation, he

referred to the student council from 2015-2016, which he described as "one of his favourites".

> Mr. Malone: And this council, um, this council is in a sense one of my favourites because it's the first time I have a council with a bit of a social justice bent. And, and, not that the other kids didn't have that, that perspective, but they never really implemented it. Ahm, and that's always something I've wanted council to be doing a little more. Not just organizing events, like parties, but, but, also to be a voice and —
>
> Jenn: So can you give me some examples?
>
> Mr. Malone: They did the colour run, which I didn't know what it was, I don't know if you know-
>
> Jenn: No.
>
> Mr. Malone: No? Colour run is uh, is a run at which you throw dried paint at each other…
>
> Jenn: [laughing,] OK...
>
> Mr. Malone: and you wear white— yeah, yeah, yeah, it's famous! They have youtube videos! Yeah, and it's an awareness thing for AIDS. So they did that. They also posted AIDS prevention posters around the school and all that.

In this excerpt, Mr. Malone linked "a social justice bent" with good youth citizenship, by identifying "a social justice bent" as a key quality of his favourite council. He described social justice as "being a voice" and "not just organizing events, like parties," hewing to the discourse produced through official "student voice" policy. Later in the interview, though,

he shifts his focus to describing how the council is able to pull off the impressive feat of hosting dances and events in "fancy" downtown nightclub-type spaces, which he bills as an achievement in terms of equity:

> Mr. Malone: And um, I think it makes, makes you feel, and I'm not, I'm not underprivileged, and all that, by any stretch, but our kids seem to manage to be doing the same type of activities that other more affluent schools manage to do. And to me that is impressive.

This return to planning events—something that had just moments before been described as not good enough—reveals the way that this aspect of the student council's work might actually be connected with a "social justice bent." In Mr. Malone's formulation, by planning sophisticated and refined events, the SAC is able to bridge some of the opportunity gap between schools like Simcoe and schools where students come from wealthier families (this also means recognizing discrepancies in opportunities for play and socializing as part of the "opportunity gap" that exists between schools in different parts of the city). In a way, Mr. Malone seemed to recognize the fantasy of infantile omnipotence that is present in his "social justice" example (AIDS awareness event) as he changes his narrative to incorporate event planning as part of what constitutes a "social justice bent." Recognizing, perhaps, the unlikelihood that AIDS touches many of these young people's lives in a significant way, Mr. Malone pivots to version of citizenship that is contained within the private realm of the school and its intimate activities and yet satisfies his own desire to preserve young people as participants in a meaningful critique of the state. In this way, his narrative works towards resolving the tension between his demands

for young citizens to act as mature, "social justice-oriented citizens" (Westheimer, 2015), a demand supported by dominant discourse, and the function that their infantile omnipotence serves in preserving a national fantasy of citizenship.

Between citizenship and the state: finding a problem

The Colour Run took place before my arrival at Simcoe; however, the contradictions about what kind of citizens young people should be played out continuously — this was particularly evident when my efforts to engage the students in the SpeakUP grant began to break down. The website for the SpeakUP grant was finally updated with the new application package in mid-November. But when I brought it up with the SAC, their earlier enthusiasm seemed to have fizzled into boredom; I felt as if I was yet another adult asking them to do something, actively circulating an almost pedantic version of youth citizenship. In passages from my field notes around this time, I note with some despair that the excitement about the SpeakUp grant seemed to have disappeared. In the following weeks, it became more and more difficult to engage the students in a discussion about it. For example, in late November, I wrote:

> *I pull up the webpage where there's a list of winning grant proposals from previous years and read them out. I feel as I'm reading that they aren't going to fly with the students, so I edit a little as I go, but I'm right. Only Munira can muster some enthusiasm about the community garden idea—she calls it cute. Safiya dismisses them all as "boring, boring, boring." I feel a little panicky, almost embarrassed suddenly, at the grant, or at being a representative of the grant. (Fieldnotes excerpt)*

Part of the problem was pragmatic: jurisdictional constraints limited the possibilities, eliminating several the council's early ideas, like paying for repairs to a dilapidated greenhouse and purchasing basic phys ed. equipment. But these pragmatic problems disguised a more systemic constraint—the SpeakUP grant promoted student voice projects which aligned with a narrowly-defined orientation toward broad social problems that extended beyond the intimate sphere of the school—projects which asked young people to engage in a set of incompatible practices: a critique of the state *and* a naively, patriotic faith in state. This contradiction seemed to literally plague at least one student: when I tried to help the students think about a "problem" that was common to many students in the school, Adia responded with moans and stomach cramps:

> *I bring up the Ministry speak up grant again—the deadline is fast approaching They land on "wellness" as an issue, but they're just halfheartedly putting things out there [...] There's not a lot of energy for this, it seems. I feel like just another adult, foisting another "thing" on them. Adia [the SAC (council) president] is suddenly physically ill, moaning on the sofa with very bad stomach cramps. (Fieldnotes excerpt)*

The students' apparent inability to identify a "problem" was notable: this group of students (like most teenagers, perhaps) seemed to have constant complaints about their lives in school. Some of their complaints seemed rooted in the kind of intergenerational tension that I describe in Chapter six: mean math teachers and grumpy hall monitors, for example. But other complaints seemed more systemic, more political, even. In previous conversations, they'd discussed some of the challenges that students at Simcoe faced, for example, affordability barriers for sports and other extra-curriculars, the lack of halal

options in the cafeteria, homophobic and sexist bullying in the halls, and a staff that didn't reflect the racial diversity of the student body. Despite this, they struggled to land on a problem around which they could organize their enthusiasm. The students dismissed these problems with boredom, apathy, even illness; to me these are symptoms of a resistance to the SpeakUP grant's demand for critique; its demand that young people confront their fantasies about "a system that works" (Berlant, 1997). A complaint about systemic racism, for example, in the context of the student voice discourses that rely on a difficult counterpoint of naiveté and skeptical critique, becomes almost unthinkable, since the critique itself dismantles the omnipotence of the naiveté. As Adam Phillips notes, "…the bored individual is clueless and mildly resentful, involved in a halfhearted, dependent search for something to do that will make a difference" (p. 78)—to recognizes and linger in boredom (and perhaps apathy as well) is to acknowledge meaninglessness.

The dying child and the infantile citizen

The student council's response to the SpeakUP grant seemed to be a picture of stereotypical teenage apathy; however, it is only part of the story. As the prospect of submitting a SpeakUp grant waned, the student council became enlivened by the Glencrest House fundraiser — the council would collect funds to purchase toys for the residents at Glencrest House, a palliative care centre for children. In this project, it seems as though the students found and created a sense of meaningfulness that the SpeakUP grant had not been able to evoke. Nevertheless, my fieldnotes, some of which are reproduced below (and edited for clarity), describe how the student council members wrestled with notions of

citizenship, responsibility, and adulthood as they engaged with the toy drive planning and the figure of the palliative child.

> *The discussion is about Winterfest. Julia is eager to get on to her agenda item—she's been chomping at the bit about it since the start of the meeting. Her idea is to get students to donate money for a sick kids toy drive project. This launches into a warning—I think started by Munira or Safiya, but it is multivocal—that they had talked to Mr. Barney about charities and he had told them that at some charities not all the money goes to the charity, but they take some for administration and salaries (They were shocked that a charity might take 10% for administration and salaries. I bite my tongue to keep from intervening here!) Safiya was particularly incensed by this and felt like all the money collected should go right to the cause—Mr. Malone interjects and says, a little patronizingly, OH, Safiya, you think everyone should work for free. They agree to do a toy drive fundraiser, but they want to buy all the toys for the kids, rather than donating the money to the hospital — again, I don't say anything about how this enriches the toy store rather than allowing the charity to take advantage of bulk purchasing rates. I feel like there isn't space in this excitement and optimism for the student voice grant, which is feeling like a bit of a drag. (November 29, fieldnotes)*

While the student council members were unable to find meaning in the "boring" social-justice oriented SpeakUP projects that I suggested to them, they were animated by the prospect of intervening in the injustice of both terminally-ill children and charities that do not do enough to help them. Their admonishment of charities which use some funds for

salaries and administration points to a view of citizenship that privileges doing good for disadvantaged others, upholding a distinction between "us and them." I suggest that this bifurcation allowed them to step outside of "the system" by focusing on a project which separates citizenship from the collectivist project of the state and from the broader public sphere. This way, they neither upheld the state nor challenged its deficiencies—in other words, they refused their political futurity and focused instead on extrastatal problems and solutions. By sidestepping the political and focusing instead on a citizenship project oriented toward the intimate and the personal, they resist calls to extend their citizenship into the public, choosing, perhaps, to allow their "newness" (Arendt, 1954) to survive a little longer.

In the next few weeks, the Glencrest House fundraiser continued to dominate the student council's work. One day at lunch, the dying child became a central object in a typically loud and playful discussion in the SAC office:

> *The topic at hand is all the money they've collected for Glencrest House—a joke takes over the room, becomes central to the moment: Safiya's manipulative plea (delivered to the classes as they go "door to door" asking for donations): "Their life sentence is death," which she credits for raising lots of the money. The others jokingly call her manipulative, accusing her playing with people's emotions. She justifies it, explaining that it's not manipulative, it's true, and "isn't it so sad, guys?" (December, fieldnotes)*

Later, I had this conversation with Adia about the success of the fundraiser and the sense of tragedy upon which it was predicated:

Jenn: Do you think it had to do with the very sad sort of situation? Safiya was telling me about the little speech she gave to the classes to try to get them to try to give money. Do you think that affected it for you, or for other people?

Adia: Yeah. Definitely. Makes you feel so guilty. And not because you're directly linked to these kids or anything, but why should we have more than they do. And we're already at a like, we're already at an advantage to them when it comes to our lives, so why don't we do something to give back to them. You know. I dunno. I don't want to say level the playing field, but to just give them as much as we have. Or try to. That was a big thing.

The terminally ill child became a shared tragedy, something which the students could take joint action toward and in which none of them were complicit. While it suggests an infantile naiveté or a kind of magical thinking, Adia's analysis here suggests that she is wrestling with the idea of her own omnipotence—she initially takes on responsibility for the children's fate by expressing guilt, but quickly retraces her steps to work through the complexities of a situation in which no responsibility can be assigned.

This exchange might also point to another shared project: a rescue of childhood, threatened by the increasing demands of maturity and adulthood. Both Safiya, in her manipulative plea for donations, and Adia, in her expressions of guilt, demonstrate a kind of identification with the dying children of Glencrest House — a different kind of infantile citizen, and one who might represent Berlant's figure in its clearest sense. Innocent and vulnerable, the terminally ill infant is outside of politics; an intimate figure whose futurity is incorruptible because it will not be tested by the reality of adulthood. The identification

with this figure and the investment in her hopeless rescue suggests that she represents space of possibility for the Adia and Safiya. The dogged focus on a tragedy for which no-one can take responsibility might provide reprieve against a discourse which attempts to assign to young people responsibility for problems which are not theirs, which attempts to expose them to the public world of political life before they have had a chance to develop. This points to a particularly Arendtian tension in the project of "student voice." Arendt writes : "Our hope always hangs on the new which every generation brings; but precisely because we can base our hope only on this, we destroy everything if we so try to control the new that we, the old, can dictate how it will look" (Arendt, 1954, p. 11). Sharon Jessop describes this threat in terms of citizenship education, warning, "in over-prescribing the attitudes and actions of young people by telling them how the world is to be set to rights, there is a danger that all that is being done is that a veneer of what appears to be social change will be laid over an unstable and insufficiently grounded understanding of the world" (Jessop, 2011, p. 994).

The toy drive project reached its apex in a two-day shopping spree and the delivery of the toys to the Centre a few days afterward. In her description of the shopping trip, Adia described a collective retreat to an unencumbered childishness:

> Jenn: Did you go to the stores one of the days?
>
> Adia: Yeah I went both days.
>
> Jenn: So can you tell me what that was like?
>
> Adia: It was fun. Really fun. I remember running around… Safiya came one day, Julia, Munira, uh, Abby came one day. Esther, Salma, Shereen, Negus, Christie both days. And then Karim, Stevie, Mo, Akash, a lot of people. We were a big group. It

> was so much fun. We ran around pressing buttons on toys, we found like, huge stuffed animals. We were having a lot of fun. Yeah! And I remember we were in line, the first time we went to the store. We had so much stuff. I think we had like three shopping carts. I think we had one for our bags and we had two full of toys. And there was a lady behind us, and she was like, angry because we had so many things. And then she was talking to us, and she was like, are you doing a toy drive, and we were telling her about it and she was like, Wow, that's amazing. And after having all that fun, like, picking out the toys, it really brought it back into perspective, like, this is for them. It makes like, it made me feel really good. Yeah.

It seems as if these young people—faced with inherited problems and a heavily circumscribed way of approaching them—were attempting to rescue their natality by turning away from state-sanctioned forms of "citizenship" and toward a project which represents the precarity of childhood, and, perhaps, their own "newness." Their rejection of the SpeakUP grant and their fervor for the Children's Palliative Centre fundraiser might be interpreted as reflective of a desire to return to the private realm of childhood and development, rather than embracing the public, worldly responsibility that the SpeakUp grant encourages.

Conclusion

Through the demise of the SpeakUP grant application and the rising success of the Glencrest House fundraiser, in my field notes, I described my efforts with the former as a failure and framed it as an example of failed citizenship (I discuss this in more detail in

chapter seven). But considered through the lens of Arendt's ideas about young people's newness and Berlant's optimism about the infantile citizen's political possibility, it seems as if the failure was one of imagination — a mature citizen's refusal to indulge the possibility that an infantile or non-adult citizenship might be productive, that it might provide, for young people, an opportunity to learn about the world and their role in it with love and care. Both Berlant (1997) and Arendt (1954) note that while the political promise of youth lies in its futurity, the present of young people's newness (for Arendt) or their infantile approach to the state (for Berlant) is an overlooked source of political potential. In the rush to give young people the opportunity to participate in political life alongside adults as citizens with equal standing, youth citizenship programs and policies risk overlooking the possibilities offered in allowing young people to develop in and learn about the world *before* taking on the responsibilities of critique and change. If, as Arendt suggests, we renew the world out of love, and it is young people's newness that allows this renewal, then providing young people the chance to develop their citizenship in a forum that is guarded from the reality-tests of public life might sustain this possibility. The students at Simcoe, presented with the opportunity to engage in the public tasks of mature citizenship through the SpeakUP grant, chose instead to focus on a project that I have interpreted as both intimate and directed inward — a rescue of their fleeting childhood. Berlant claims that the infantile citizen, in her utopian naiveté, has the power to unsettle and to disrupt, even if this disruption is contained to the realm of possibility and futurity. The student council members' decision to focus their citizenship work on the Glencrest House fundraiser, rather than turn outward as prompted by the SpeakUP grant suggests that they, too, understood the importance of preserving their "newness" and their "infantile" approach to

citizenship, even as policies and discourses about student voice and student leadership seemed to offer them conflicted visions of what it means to be a young citizen.

Chapter 6:

Young people and Democracy: Vulnerability, Authority, and Conflict

It was a grey and drizzly fall afternoon—Simcoe students were milling around outside the main lodge of Camp Tall Trees, wrapped in sleeping bags and comforters or with hoods pulled tight around their faces. A few girls were hiding out in the main lodge, brewing tea in melamine mugs: they weren't supposed to be there outside of mealtimes, and so they were soon ushered out by a teacher. It was the first day of camp, and as if to confirm all stereotypes, these city kids were already cold.

I learned quickly that camp was one of the highlights of the year among the students involved in student council and other leadership activities at Simcoe. During my first, introductory interviews, SAC members implored me to find a way to come to camp. As it turns out, I was invited to attend camp—actually a team-building/leadership retreat mashup held at a summer camp site about three hours outside the city. A group of about 30 senior students served as peer leaders, facilitating team-building activities and supervising cabins for the incoming grade nine students. Camp took place in late-September, at Camp Tall Trees, a quintessential Ontario summer camp. Rough-hewn, decades old structures are tucked into groups of newer ones, and generations of happy summers are memorialized in dingy wall art and nicknames carved into tables and cabin walls. A short walk around the grounds reveals a series of modern, well-appointed buildings and elaborate outdoor activities, including a theatre, complete with stage lighting and a sound system; a shed full of mountain bikes; an archery range; two high ropes courses; and a large swimming area which is enclosed by floating docks with a floating campfire platform anchored in the middle. While the floating campfire looked like it belonged in South Beach, the main lodge maintained a sense of

roughing it, with drafty windows and a creaky pine floor. It was not lost on me, as I explored the grounds and the buildings, that this world of camp friends and tuck shops and floating campfires was one that the majority Simcoe students— the majority of young people, period—did not have access to.

The students were gathered outside the main lodge at Adia's (the student council president) request, to hear some announcements. In consultation with the camp staff, Mr. Barney (the principal) had decided that it was too rainy to go ahead with the campfire that was planned for that evening — it was up to Adia and the other student leaders to communicate the change of plans and decide on a new activity for the evening. Standing on a picnic table, Adia took the opportunity to deliver a rally speech of sorts, encouraging the students gathered around her to feel like the school is family, while also imploring them to appreciate all that the SAC and the peer leaders have done and will do for them. "We are doing all this for you!" she shouted, "So be a part of it!" Standing above the rest of the students, she invited them into a family drama marked by both filial piety and care.

The back-up plan for the rainy evening was a talent show. Throughout the afternoon and into the evening, groups of students rehearsed their acts, and then gathered for a quick run-through, complete with sound and lighting, stage directed by competent and knowledgeable grade eleven students. Neither the camp staff nor the teacher supervisors inquired about the rehearsal's progress or offered assistance — it turned out that while the principal had boasted that camp was "democratic — the kids are in charge," this was one of the few aspects that the students truly presided over.

The stage directors' competence notwithstanding, the talent show was a casual, thrown together event. Even with the house lights dimmed and the sophisticated stage

lighting and sound system, it had a giddy, childish feel. The students sat on the pine floor of the theatre, like in a grade school gym, and the teachers sat on a few low benches around the perimeter, or leaned against the theatre walls watching the show, but also, the audience. Most of the acts were typical talent show fare: dance routines and karaoke versions of top 40 hits. But one group of boys—all "peer leaders"— performed an elaborate, 2-act skit that was the highlight of the evening. The plot was somehow both convoluted and simple—likely a common trait of high-school skits—but most of all, it was didactic. The gist of the skit was as follows: a couple of boys break the rules by leaving their cabins at night, and are caught by their cabin leaders after being frightened by noises in the woods. Then, the whole group is frightened by rustlings in the dark, and thanks to their childish shrieking, is caught by the teachers, who assume all the students are breaking the rules together. The students apologize profusely and repeat the moral of the story: follow the rules and listen to the teachers. The boys who took the roles of the teachers parodied them only gently, mocking the principal's heavy glasses and Mr. Malone's French-Canadian accent, many of the others essentially played themselves — student leaders who command only unequal respect from both their ninth-grade charges and the teachers who have granted them authority, if only temporarily. The audience—including the teachers and much of the cast—responded with non-stop laughter. The tone was tender, almost loving: the characters were played with humour, not resentment, and the rollicking laughter seemed happy rather than malicious.

The skit reproduced the layers of authority that structured relations between teachers and students at Simcoe. The skit-students' fear of rustlings in the woods suggests the real students as vulnerable, fearful perhaps not of monsters in the dark, but of other, weightier unknowns. The teachers are presented as reasonable, responsible, and (accurately) as able to

survive the conflicts that the young people's emergent production of authority might create. Student leaders, in the skit, straddle both positions, shrieking in the dark alongside the younger skit-students and taking responsibility for their safety by quashing their nighttime escapades.

This skit, with its layers of authority both real and fictional illustrates the central question that this chapter grapples with: the challenge of figuring out what to do with authority in the conflicted and changing relationships that structure adolescence and schooling. Since many student leadership and youth citizenship programmes, including the ones I describe here, are circumscribed by the school and its affective dynamics, student leadership and youth citizenship often finds itself at odds with the way that authority is produced and circulated in schools. Throughout this chapter I use examples from my fieldwork to highlight the paradoxes and tensions that arose at Simcoe around the enactment of authority. The chapter explores the ways that authority and democracy are connected in high school and within student leadership practices in particular. While the teachers and students at Simcoe seemed to feel that authority had something to do with the democratization of educational life, the ways in which students and teachers recognize, legitimate, resist, and enjoy authority reflects the inherent uneasiness of the relationship between authority and democracy. The skit described above demonstrates how the students relished in a playful masking and unmasking of authority, but it ultimately reveals the messiness of fitting a liberal-democratic supra-structure neatly onto an organization that is necessarily defined by conflict. I explore the contradictory and often overlapping approaches to authority at Simcoe, using interview data as well as my observations about

how authority was produced and circulated and in what forms it appeared. Returning to the scene of camp, the annual leadership retreat described above, I consider how these engagements with authority shaped the way that democracy and student leadership intersected at Simcoe. Drawing on the work of political theorists Chantal Mouffe and Hannah Arendt, I relate the students and the teachers' experiences of authority to questions that rankle the practice of democracy in schools: consensus, equality, care, and vulnerability.

Authority in schools

One of the ways that contemporary education practitioners try to democratize schools is by disrupting and reconstructing authority relations. This effort is at the basis of the most recent move, from the 1960s onward, toward increased student voice and student leadership. However, authority is rarely something that can be successfully transmitted and certainly not within a democratic or proto-democratic context. Because authority is something more than a scepter or a conch or a set of rules, it cannot simply be given or transferred to children and young people in school settings. To get around this, critical educational scholars adopt a diffractionary or deconstructive (and re-distributive) approach to authority, arguing for consensus or deliberation as replacements for authoritative political structures. However; in schools, reconstructing authority relations to align with consensus or deliberative democratic models presents irreconcilable tensions, because these forms of democracy don't account for the conflicts that arise from the complicated relationship between children and adults.

The relationship between children and adults has as its first model the relationship between parents and their children. Teachers and other school staff step into a relational role that is tinged with this family drama (as do students) and which has been codified in common law as the principle of *"in loco parentis"* — the expectation that teachers (and other adults charged with their care) will act in the place of a (reasonable) parent as they carry out their duties. Teachers' legal imperative to act *in loco parentis* has been largely replaced in Canadian common law with the duty to act in a *professional* capacity as an agent of the state (Levin & Wallin, 2014). However, since the structure of classroom life often mimics that of family life, with the teacher taking on the role of the archetypical "Strict Father" or "Nurturing Mother" (Podis & Podis, 2007), or some combination, and the students, like siblings, fighting for this adult's attention, the principle continues to organize the relationships between young people and their teachers. Teachers, in some way or another, stand in for parents in schools, reproducing the inevitable imbalance between young people and their parents. Students, too, repeat their family dramas in school, casting their teachers as replicas of their parents, or perhaps, as improved versions. Contemporary discourses around authority and democratic practices in schools neglect this affective dimension, and instead focus on the cognitive and the ideological. Nevertheless, these complicated relations are the unsteady foundation for educational approaches to authority.

Both inside and outside the school, authority is associated both with despotic and oppressive regimes as well as with careful, effective leadership. Political authority is complicated, in part, because it is so deeply personal, so interconnected with our experiences of authority in our early family lives. Throughout our development as young people and as adults, we are alternately "attracted to and repulsed by" authority (Sennett,

1980) — and sometimes these feelings occur at same time. In a survey of historical approaches to authority in educational settings, Pace and Hemmings point out how these conflicted feelings about authority coalesce in an "ideal/imaginary" American identity: "Americans admire strong leadership and expert knowledge; however, they resist the power and dictates of authority figures, and they strongly believe in egalitarianism" (Pace & Hemmings, 2007).

The question of authority in schools was of particular interest to educationalists working in the 1960s and 1970s—a time of political, civil, and social unrest that some observers labeled as a 'crisis of authority ' (Benne, 1970; Glatthorn, 1968). Researchers at this time produced many ethnographies and other empirical studies that explored the ways that authority was understood, enacted, and resisted in schools (Adelson, 1971; Benne, 1970; Metz, 1978; Pace & Hemming, 2007; Sennet, 1980). These studies also led to the development of theories of authority that were particularly attuned to the unique characteristics of compulsory schooling: an institution founded upon traditional adult/child and expert/novice hierarchies, and in many cases racial and gendered hierarchies as well. Many called into question the *in loco parentis* form of authority that, with a few notable exceptions, had been the norm in schools, but instead of developing approaches which attempted to dismantle these traditional hierarchies, they describe authority in neutral terms, divorcing it from the notion of "power." In this view, power is viewed as a blunt instrument used *against* the wills of those who are subjected to it, whereas authority is presented as an agreement or relation that parties enter into willingly, or out of self-interest. Carol Metz, (1978) the author of an influential ethnography about authority in schools, describes this agreement in terms of a shared "moral order," while

other theorists working with the idea of authority describe it in terms of agreement, consent, and the subordinate's belief that the shared project is also consistent with her own self-interest (Pace & Hemmings, 2007).

In each of these formulations, authority relationships are formed amongst equals—individuals operating freely and autonomously—even if their practice results in a hierarchical structure. The parties enter into the relationships because they serve their perceived interests or advance a collective project that aligns with a shared moral order. However, critical theorists and post-structuralists have found plenty to disagree with in this model of authority, arguing that the notion of agentic individuals evaluating and then entering into authority relationships neglects the insidious ways that power produces knowledge and subjectivity. This stems from the Foucaultian notion that rejects the idea of power as a blunt instrument and that holds instead that power is experienced as a set of relations that are produced and sustained through societal structures and discourses. That is, what is knowable about the context or the parties involved in an authority relationship is limited by power relations that are conservative and consolidating. What an individual subject can know about her interests or her relationship to a "moral order" or even her perceived best interests is also constrained by power. Thus, while some (especially American) educational theorists, like Metz (1978) and Benne (1970) create a distinction between power and authority, claiming that they are ultimately unique concepts that can be evaluated separately, critical educational theorists, influenced by poststructuralism, argue that the two cannot be disentangled. Since social structures like schools, health care institutions, and the modern family circulate power, then the authority relations formed

within them are necessarily shaped by power. This is further complicated by the variety in approaches to children in terms of power and equality.

At the intersection of vulnerability and voice

Many contemporary theorists of children and youth, drawing on feminist and poststructuralist theory, argue that young people's inequality is due, at least in part, to power structures that produce them as incomplete, immature, irrational, even monstrous (Lesko, 2001). Hierarchical authority structures and institutions, such as schools, reify this construction, leaving little room for young people to imagine themselves differently — and this is further complicated when factors such as race, gender, and ability intersect with age. Critical pedagogy theorists such as Giroux (2011) and Anyon (1981) further suggest hierarchical authority structures limit the ways that adults perceive young people and young people perceive themselves, further entrenching the child as other to the normative adult. Student voice researchers influenced by this school of thought (Fielding, 2004; Fielding & Moss, 2011; Flutter, 2006; Hart, 1992) attempt to solve the problem of equality and authority in two ways: first by exposing the inequality between children and adults as a social construction caused by hierarchical authority structures like the ones we see in traditional schooling, and then by arguing for the dismantling of these hierarchies. This solution is only tenable if we agree that children's inequality in relation to adults is caused only by oppressive power relations and that it can be repaired, or equalized, when the structures and institutions that unequal power relations support are dismantled. However, the problem of equality between children and adults becomes more difficult to address if the developmental and relational differences between children and adults are included in the analysis. In other words, how do the particulars of young people's relationships vis-à-

vis the adult world — their physical and economic dependence, for example, complicate the deconstruction narrative put forth by critical student voice scholars?

Researchers in sexuality education are particularly well-positioned for grappling with the tensions that arise when the notion of children's political (or sexual) agency obscures the material constraints of their development. While the specific debates are different, this literature offers a way of thinking through this conflict. Discourses around children's sexuality often construct young people as innocent and sexually neutral, in need of protection from the corrupting influence of sexuality (Lamb, 2018). While the discourse of childhood innocence suggests a child that is characterized by lack and is thus somehow less-than, (and that in order to maintain child-ness, this lack must be protected and maintained) Lamb argues instead for an understanding of childhood that preserves the child as complete but maintains the imperative to protect. From a different perspective, Fields and Garcia (2018) remind both researchers and educators to consider structural and systemic vulnerabilities alongside developmental vulnerabilities that young people encounter. This means acknowledging the ways that young people's vulnerability is at least partly produced through systems and structures that interact with young people's developmental vulnerability.

Just as the literature around young people's sexuality grapples with the polar notions of innocence and agency, research in the field of student voice faces a similar debate. Unlike some theories of sexuality education, which attempt to protect young people from exposure to the so-called "adult" world of sexuality, critical student voice research does not attempt to protect young people from the influence of the adult world of citizenship and politics. Within the literature and policy field of student voice, there is a

dominant discourse around the idea of affording young people equality so that they can participate in the political realm. Why is the political one of the few areas where adults are willing—even eager—to disavow children's difference, to overlook the structural and developmental vulnerabilities that mark them as Other? A number of contemporary scholars have offered insights: Lamb and Jarkovska (2018) note that the figure of the politically agentic young person is often idealized, her innocence used as a pathetic rhetorical device in the service of adults' political goals — this may be purposeful and manipulative marketing. Bessant (2004) and Black (2011) have critiqued the notion of the politicized child, theorizing this figure as an extension of the neoliberal "self-made" person, to whom the state and its extensions owe no special protections . Or, as Arendt (1958) insists, it may be the result of a refusal, on the part of adults, to accept responsibility for the world.

Democracy in public and private: Arendt and Mouffe

Arendt (1958) decries the long tradition of implicating children in the initiation of political utopias, in other words, the belief that "one must begin with the children if one wishes to produce new conditions" (p. 3). She argues that renewal of the world can only occur if young people are permitted to bring their newness to the old world — she points out that any "new order" that adults attempt to offer young people will already be "old." Instead, Arendt proposes a conservative approach: young people must be allowed to develop their unique characteristics and talents in private, before being introduced to the (public) world. This means that the young person's development ought to take place in away from the glare of public life; schools, like families, are classified as private because though they include adults, in these situations, adults relate to young people in a "natural"

way, which I take (perhaps generously) to mean in a way that takes into account the complicated emotions that structure families and the adult/child relationships that mimic them. The public world, which is the realm of politics and work is, for Arendt, characterized by equality, a principle that does not apply in the private realm.

The argument that equality is a fundamental principal only within the public realm is challenging, when read in a contemporary context, as is her insistence that schools be excluded from the political world. In her article, "Reflections on Little Rock," (1959) Arendt uses the case of federally mandated desegregation of schools in the US in the late 1950s to argue that discrimination, in the case of schooling, is a private, rather than a public matter. According to Arendt, children (and the schools they attend) belong to the private realm; therefore, governments should not be in the business of enforcing the desegregation of schools. I am not convinced that the project of desegregation is, as Arendt claims, simply a question of discrimination, nor am I convinced that the school can be completely excluded from the political. Post-structuralist and feminist theorists, among others, have shown that political life necessarily affects the so-called private spheres of family and schooling through the insidious production and circulation of power through discourse. Consequently, the matter of discrimination, which Arendt argues is a private matter, is deeply embedded in the power relations that shape both public and private life. My analysis does not attempt to "rescue" Arendt's argument—rather, I want to hone my focus on her argument about the consequences of the separation of public and private for authority in schools.

In treating schools as part of the private realm, where equality between citizens is not required or expected, Arendt is calling for a conception of authority that, in a way,

mimics the relations between parents and children. This is a relation that calls for the imbrication of adults lives with the lives of children, as adults take responsibility for the world and for introducing young people to it, instead of ceding their authority to children and children's world. She cautions against the dismantling of hierarchical authority relations in schools. Writing in the late 1950s, her frame of reference was the progressive education movement, rather than the deconstructionist theories of later decades; however, her concerns about authority traverse these conceptual differences. Her conception of authority and responsibility in schools is not egalitarian. Instead, it holds space for the conflicts that stem from intergenerational life, whether in families or in schools. The preservation of these undying conflicts, through generational inequality, offers important insights into the application of democratic principles such as consensus and deliberation in settings in which adults and young people are brought together.

Democracy was (and is) one of the principal aims of the progressive education movement that Arendt (1958) so vigorously critiques. In Dewey's seminal work, *Democracy in Education* (1916), the teacher's expert authority is displaced, replaced with the students' experiential authority. This redistribution of authority flattens the hierarchy between the teacher and the student, making all parties equal. Marking a fundamental shift in the way students and teachers relate, it is a foundational plank in the introduction of democratic practices in schools. However, efforts to democratize school life are complicated by complex relationships between young people and adults, just as democracy in the so-called "public" realm of politics is complicated by the emotions and attachments that structure affective life.

In her book, *The Democratic Paradox,* Chantal Mouffe (2004) takes up the dissonance between rationalist, technocratic approaches to democratic practice and the affective undercurrents that influence political life in a critique of both the deliberative model of democracy and the consensus-oriented model that informs it. The tension, for her, stems from an irreconcilable tension between democracy and liberalism: democracy's insistence on equality and popular, collective rule is fundamentally at odds with liberalism's foundation in the protection of individual rights and liberties. (Mouffe, p. 4). Mouffe argues that in contemporary politics, the negotiation of this tension has been subsumed by the idea of "rational consensus" (p. 7), leading to a deadening of conflict and struggle between two logics: the principles of equality and those of individual liberty. Mouffe argues that democratic projects which hew to rationalists frameworks (she includes the "traditional left" in this category) hold the mistaken belief that the traces of power and exclusion can be erased from political life, allowing antagonistic political relations to disappear. At the same time, she worries that neo-liberal, third-way politics has created a "consensual politics of the centre" (p. 7), which threatens the future of democracy by making anything else — including political conflict — seem anti-democratic or anti-freedom. The success of a healthy democratic politics, in her view, depends not on eliminating confrontation between these two poles, but on making this conflict productive.

While Mouffe's interpretation of consensus oriented democracy may seem hyperbolic, her critique—that it "tends to erase the very place of the adversary, thereby expelling any legitimate opposition from the democratic public sphere" (p. 14)—is a good starting point for examining how efforts to democratize school life via student leadership and student voice are complicated by paradoxical imperatives that structure life in

school. How should democracy function in schools, when young people are neither equal to adults nor granted the individual liberty that adults enjoy? Efforts to negotiate these tensions — for example, programs which attempt to equalize relations between policy makers and student leaders — reflect the tensions around democratic politics in the world outside school, but they also engage with the particularities of adolescence and its relation to authority. I want to extend Mouffe's argument that democratic politics must not attempt to erase conflict but instead, work within it to consider the question of authority and democracy in schools. If a consensus-oriented democratic politics demands negotiation between equality and individual liberty, even in schools, then what can we make of the school's tacit commitment to protect young people, when this commitment almost certainly means limiting their freedom and exercising a degree of authority over them? Conversely, what does it mean for student leaders, whose priorities may not reflect the best interests of the plurality? How does the rational consensus model of democracy make space for the affective, that is to say, for the emotional conflicts that organize relationships between adults and young people in schools?

Like Mouffe, though coming from a very different context, the educational theorist Kenneth Benne (1970) argues for the acknowledgement of conflict as a part of democratic practice in schools. Writing retrospectively about the "crisis of authority" of the 1960s in high schools, Benne describes the failures of rule authority and expert authority and instead turns to "anthropogogical authority". Anthropogogical authority works *with* the practices and relationships within a community, instead of against them. This does not mean that this form of authority evades conflict, however, instead of overlaying and obscuring the often-conflictual relationships between people (and especially between

adults and young people) it takes these relationships as central to its legitimacy. Benne foreshadows Mouffe's centering of conflict in theories of authority: if "authority relations are to be rebuilt in our disoriented and conflict-ridden institutions of education, teachers and administrators in these institutions must learn to accept conflict as part of the reality of contemporary life and education and to utilize it in giving focus and motivation to processes of conjoint learning" (p. 407). Moreover, he is, like Mouffe, wary of "solutions" to the problem of democracy and authority which erase conflict through consensus or deliberation. Like Benne and Mouffe, I am wary of approaching the issue of authority in democratic schools in binary. Can we deconstruct authority — assuming that deconstruction is undertaken with the goal of better understanding — and then reconstruct it in a way that recognizes and upholds the conflicts and affective dynamics that are inevitable aspects of both democratic politics and authority?

Authority *in loco parentis* at Simcoe

Simcoe was a traditional school in that it operated under the kind of general hierarchical structure that one might expect in a high school. The teachers and administrators held the most authority and students more or less complied. Many of the students behaved in a way that suggested that they valued education and hoped to go on to post-secondary education. The school was organized around this shared goal — following Metz' (1978) theory of authority as connected to a shared moral order, the students might be seen as willingly submitting to the adults' authority because they recognized that this would serve their best interests, i.e., it would help them achieve their goals for post-secondary education. However, some of the interactions I observed and the conversations I

had with students and staff suggest that this instrumentalist view of authority is incomplete.

The teachers' and administrator's authority were legitimized not only by the traditional and interpersonal adult/child dichotomy, but by appeals to policy and to other institutions. For instance, in meetings with the student council, Mr. Barney frequently appealed to fiscal policy, office management policies, and board level insurance policies to legitimize his authority. Likewise, Mr. Malone, the student council advisor and French teacher, would appeal to the school's policy about GPA minimums and attendance during student council meetings, as I describe in my field notes, excerpted below. At the end of each reporting period, he would arrive at the student council meeting with each member's grades printed out and conduct public discussions about each students' progress. Or, he would use grades as the context for a pep talk, aligning the student council members' work with that of the institution. An example of this, from my fieldnotes, is below:

> *[Lunchtime council meeting] Mr. Malone talks about how he has their "printouts" of their marks—he says he should have brought them. Lots of improvement, he says but Dina pipes in and says she knows her physics mark is down, Mr. Malone agrees with an exhale and a dramatic head shake. Dina wants to major in physics or engineering, so I know it's important. This is a very public conversation, which surprises me. Zahra follows him down the hall, to get her report—which Mr. Malone seems disappointed in, mostly because of lates and absences. Later he tells me they all have excellent marks—they're brilliant, he says, and he shows me one of their reports, which is all high 90s. (Fieldnotes, May 2016)*

In calling upon his institutional authority, Mr. Malone reified the hierarchical authority structure in the school, and also solidified the students' vulnerability to this authority and its cadre of arbitrary-seeming rules. The school's rule mandating that a council member give up her role if her grades dropped below a certain threshold meant that the student council's authority was contingent upon sustaining a level of vulnerability to this structural instrument of authority. This both undermines the possibility of the students as equals, but it also introduces an element of care. None of the student council members were ever at risk of falling below the minimum threshold — this seemed to be common knowledge — and so this ritual might be interpreted as a theatrical affirmation of care — perhaps even displayed for my benefit.

The authority relation between staff and students was also bolstered by the stringency through which Mr. Malone enforced the (fairly arbitrary) election process rules (for example, a deduction of 5 votes for each campaign poster left up past 3:35 pm on election day), and the work required by student council members to obtain class exemptions. Instead of explaining to their teachers that they would be absent on council business, council members were required to have a form signed by Mr. Malone or Mr. Barney, in advance, in order to miss class. For some students, this degree of surveillance might make sense; for the already overachieving members of the student council, it seemed onerous. However, it served a secondary purpose, related to complex intersection of authority and care that I described above. Beyond letting the students know that their attendance and the tidiness of the halls mattered, these proto-bureaucratic regulations mimicked the bureaucracy of the public word, while maintaining the low-stakes of the "private" realm of the school. Trivial regulations, then, became part of the protective

structure of the school, which insists on young people's vulnerability as well as adults' responsibility to create an environment that is shielded from the higher stakes of the public world.

At Simcoe, this negotiation of responsibility and authority was especially clear in the student council's financial matters. The teachers and administrators generally had the ability to sink or float the student councils' larger plans. For instance, every year, it seemed as if Mr. Malone allowed plans for a homecoming dance to fail. Each year, the council planned the dance (the first, ever!, they promised) but each time, dismal ticket sales promptly led to its cancellation. At the same time, Mr. Malone seemed content to work behind the scenes to pull together additional funds to make sure that the winter semi-formal that the students planned went forward — again, for both of the winter semi-formal dances I was present for at Simcoe, ticket sales were not quite robust enough to cover the costs of the dance. Both times, Mr. Malone quietly arranged for extra funding "from Mr. Barney" to cover the shortfall. Through these practices, institutional authority was pervasive, even as it was produced through Mr. Malone's fiscal policy. However, they also indicate a kind of care — a kind of gentle scaffolding that is reminiscent of parental care.

These practices are reminiscent of the *in loco parentis* approach to of authority that Metz (1978) identifies as the most basic version of how authority is understood and enacted in schools—an understanding of authority that is not founded on individualist instrumentalism or a shared moral order but rather, on tradition. Metz (1978) argues that in the traditional form of authority, young people comply with elders (teachers) *because* it is traditional, and elders, following "time-honored conventions," expect young people to obey them "simply because they occupy the position of [elder]" (Metz, 1978, p. 6). This

pattern exists outside of school, too, and is one of the organizing principles of our earliest relationships—in other words, this relation may appear to begin and end with institutionalized traditions, but I argue that it is rooted in the imperatives of development, which begin in infancy.

Mr. Malone often appealed directly to this adult/child authority relation in his interactions with the students—contrasting his suggestions that they "do things on your own" and "decide for yourselves" with a habit of addressing them as "my children," both in large and small groups. In taking "ownership" of the students as a parent might with this archaic, almost pastoral phrase, the teacher reaffirms the persistence of *in loco parentis* in schools. *In loco parentis*, as a legal principle, has been used to justify the invasion of young people's individual rights — however, as a pedagogical concept, it offers an important way of thinking about the relationship between adults and children in schools — the responsibilities that adults have towards young people, but also the affective orientations that structure these responsibilities. While demanding an acknowledgement of young people's vulnerability — their difference from adults — *in loco parentis* can also open up a space for care and love in the relationship between teachers and students.

Democracy, conflict, and disrupted authority

Despite the consolidation of authority in the structures of the institution and the return to an *in loco parentis* authority relation, both Mr. Barney and Mr. Malone also worked to a narrative of diffracted authority. Neither cited a specific policy or recommendation, but in their conversations with me and with the students (in my presence), they described ways that their programming or interactions with young people

aligned with the deconstructionist narratives that underpin critical pedagogy and the student voice work that is influenced by it. They were eager to point out the ways that the students took charge and to provide examples of students taking on authority roles. The notions about anti-hierarchical disruptions of traditional schooling are discursively produced—they come from professional development literature and from shifting attitudes toward pedagogy, but also from shifting ideas about a self-sufficient, neoliberal young subject. At Simcoe, these institutionally-sanctioned directives/discourses about shifting authority relationship amongst young people and adults were complicated by traditional, *in loco parentis* approaches to authority, which created barriers to the achievement of a consensus-style democracy amongst adults and young people.

Camp was one of the main sites of democratic practice at Simcoe. It was meant to set the stage for the year to come; by putting young people at the helm, the administration hoped that the personalities, needs, and desires of the students would inform both the retreat's programming and the relationships that would carry forward into the school year. But the attempts to disrupt authority relations and create an egalitarian democratic structure were frustrated by both young people's and adults' ambivalence about this shift in how authority was produced and enacted in school.

While I didn't attend camp until the second year of my fieldwork, I heard a lot about it before then. The current principal, Mr. Barney, launched the program only a few years earlier when he began working at the school. When I approached him at the beginning of the project, it quickly became the centre of our conversation — it was a centerpiece of the discussion about student voice and student leadership at the school. Likewise, when I connected with Mr. Malone for the first time, he identified it as one of the most important

examples of student leadership at the school. It was a source of pride for both Mr. Malone and Mr. Barney, who talked about it in the context of democracy, autonomy, and authority.

In my first interview with Mr. Barney, he framed the camp in terms of democracy, equating the students' equal voice and decision making with democratic practice.

> Mr. Barney: "the leaders run it. So they're in charge of, of organizing it. Um, things like as simple as cabin groups, um, sort of, ahm, making decisions on what activities we're gonna do at the camp. So it's, it's very very good. I'm kind of like one of the leaders. And there's two other teachers. Mr. Malone is one of the other teachers, and Ms. Binstock. But it's very [two second pause] democratic. Because the kids get a big say."

In this short response Mr. Barney makes a significant effort to position camp as both good and democratic, or good *because* it is democratic. As was the case throughout most of our interview, his narrative stuck to a "student voice" script, which conflates equality and democracy and calls for an anti-hierarchical redistribution of authority. After a quick description of what it looks like for leaders to "run camp" he positions himself ambiguously as one of the leaders, saying "I'm kind of like one of the [peer] leaders" but runs this statement directly into a comment connecting him to "other" teachers, as if he is struggling to demonstrate to me that he has a new place within a disrupted hierarchy. When he claims that he is "like a leader," he is occupying an egalitarian position—he is one of the student leaders—and constructing the relation between teachers and students as a consensus-style democracy. However, the ambiguity of the statement betrays a confidence in the possibility of consensus-building between young people and adults and seems to

acknowledge the conflict inherent in equality between children and adults. Along with a claim to egalitarianism, Mr. Barney also stakes a position within an institutional hierarchy, like the other teachers he mentions. His statement that camp is democratic is actually a qualifier. It comes immediately after the mention of teachers; as if just their mention (to me) might threaten the value of his project. By reassuring me that camp is "very democratic" he repairs this damage, erasing the impact, or at least the appearance of the teachers' superiority.

There is a tension between the principal's role as an adult authority and the policy/political push to flatten this hierarchy in order to create a consensus-style democracy. The egalitarian thread in Mr. Barney's discourse (which mirrors much contemporary student voice discourse) is a wedge, introducing an impossibility into the scene of democracy at Simcoe. The notion of equality between adults and young people (at least in terms of authority) is complicated by adults' responsibilities to young people and young people's vulnerabilities, both developmental and structural. The adults at Simcoe reinforced this difference constantly, in their terms of address/endearment, their adherence to bureaucratic regulations, and their gentle scaffolding. Young people often resisted this, by challenging or ignoring adults, or by griping about adults in private, but these complaints did not change the overall structure of relationships between adults and young people. Thus, the scene of student leadership at Simcoe was often a scene of intergenerational conflict, as the students pushed against the teachers' authority, or dropped the ball on organizational tasks, or ignored the teachers entirely. This conflict, though, was contained by the teachers' responsibility — the traces of *in loco parentis* that persisted as a structuring force in the relationships between student leaders and their

teachers. One of the implied goals of camp (and the pre-camp preparatory leadership sessions) was to replace this inequality with a non-hierarchical, egalitarian arrangement *so that democratic practice could take place.* In other words according to Mr. Barney's narrative around camp and democracy, equality between students and teachers — the redistribution of responsibility and vulnerability and the erasure of the intergenerational conflict that this upholds — was a precondition for democratic practice. This logic — that the erasure of conflict is key to democratic practice — echoes Mouffe's (2000) critique of deliberative and consensus-oriented forms of democratic politics. The conflict between young people and adults is different from the class-based struggle that Mouffe implies; however, the foundation underlying the conflict is the same — a tension between the rights of people, young or grown-up, to individual liberty on one hand, and their right to protection from inequality on the other. When student voice or student leadership programs in schools work towards a democratic politics of consensus that prioritizes the elimination of conflict, then the intergenerational conflict (the pull between vulnerability and independence that is otherwise conceptualized as the pull between protection and individual liberty) that is necessarily a part of young people's development is also threatened. According to Mouffe (2000), this is an impossible proposition anyway: "every consensus appears as a stabilization of something essentially unstable and chaotic" (p. 136).

This impasse is loosened — at least in my interpretation — by a retrospective turn to Arendt's thinking about the public and private worlds. Arendt (1958) argues that it is only in the public realm should equality be required. Because young people belong to the private realm, and are excluded from the public realm of politics, they are also excluded

from the imperative of equality. This is not to say that young people are not touched by politics in every aspect of their lives, but rather, that their work as young people "becoming," or developing in order to meet the world, is contained and supported by the relations of responsibility and vulnerability of the private realm. This formulation allows the conflict between young people and adults to persist, but it precludes young people from participation in the public, and thus from participation in politics. Arendt's ideas about the separation of the political from the private realm — and her concern about the erosion of this distinction — can help think about Mr. Barney's explanation of his role in camp as part of a project in equality. Even though the school exists as a kind of proto-state, and any democratic practice operating within it is fairly limited in scope, a consensus approach to democracy and authority in the school is nevertheless complicated by the persistence of the conflict between children and adults.

Finding space for conflict: the pleasure of protest

The tension between efforts to establish democratic practices by transferring authority to students and students' ambivalent receipt of that authority was persistent at Simcoe. Excerpts from interviews and from my fieldnotes about camp and other day-to-day scenes show how the disruption of traditional authority relations between adults and young people was complicated by the conflict between vulnerability and independence, between equality of outcomes and individual liberty. One of the ways that young people (and teachers) responded to this conflict was through protest — young people protested against both adult authority *and* its redistribution. Young people's protests against authority needn't be read as a call for the transfer of *more* authority to young people—

rather these protests should be understood as part of young people's negotiation of the proto-public world of high school: a world that is private in the way that Arendt imagines, even as it mimics the structures of the public, political world. In this proto-political space, young people can safely resist or reject authority that is transferred to them, they can exploit it, or they can embrace it and then fail spectacularly to use it appropriately, whatever that might mean. This provides space for the development of young people's own networks of authority.

Amongst the student leaders at Simcoe, this protest came in many forms. For example, Dina, the student council president from the first year of my fieldwork, regularly challenged Mr. Malone's rules and decisions, demanding to know his reasoning for each one; Alicia, one of the other council members, admitted to ignoring his emails and text messages; and the less combative 2016-2017 council had a secret list of nicknames for all of the teachers involved in student leadership. My first interview with Zahra, the 2015-2016 secretary, provides an example of the pleasure that protest offers students (Gilbert, 2016).

Compared to many of the students at Simcoe, Zahra seemed sophisticated. She was attending Simcoe on optional attendance, a decision she told me she'd made on her own, on a whim. She had been living part-time with a much older sister since her parents had retired to a far-flung suburb. By grade 12, she'd completed most of the credits she needed to get into the business programs that she was interested in, so she had more spare periods than most students. She worked part-time in a variety of high-end retail shops—as much for the discounts as anything, she told me—so she sometimes wore glamourous clothing

and elaborate make-up. Her sophistication was betrayed only by her childish, high-pitched voice.

Zahra suggested that I try to attend camp, given my interest in student leadership. It's awesome, she said, repeatedly. In an interview a few weeks later, when I pressed Zahra to describe some of the "awesome" parts about camp, or some of the "awesome" things that had happened there, she framed her experience in terms of authority, telling, and then retelling a story about her failure to act out authority at camp.

I prompted Zahra to describe one thing that was "awesome" about camp. She responded by describing it as awful:

> Zahra: Oh, I just, so many. They gave me the most, like rambunctious group. So ah, every group had like four leaders. So they put me and three grade 10 boys as the leaders, which was like, fine. I liked them… They- like, if you knew these kids you would realize how- like, they're really crazy. Like they were like crazy. They took my bag, they emptied it out. The thing is, they all really liked me, like they were all really nice to me, but they were also really awful. Like they were crazy. Like- I just- it was just awful—Every single person in my group was just crazy.

In subsequent prompts or requests for clarification, Zahra could only return to the conflicting ideas that it was "awesome" and "they were crazy." In fact, even in subsequent conversations, this is the only recollection Zahra could provide about camp—instead of telling me about thrilling or unique experiences like the high-ropes course or the canoe trip, she focused on this story of a conflict and failed authority. Why is this the story Zahra

needs to tell about camp? And why does she repeatedly name an apparently terrible authority relation as "awesome"?

Later in the interview Zahra described asking Mr. Barney for help managing her group—he gives her some classic (and dubiously effective) classroom management techniques, like turning the lights on and off and using a quiet voice rather than yelling. While this emphasizes the hopes for a simple transposition of authority from teacher to student, it also points to Zahra's rejection of attempts to flatten the hierarchy that exists between the adult authorities and the "peer leader" authorities. According to Britzman, the adolescent hates the teacher's demands for compliance (Britzman, 2012,) and yet here Zahra is in a situation in which she is asked both to comply with the demands of a hierarchy and demand compliance from other adolescents, thus becoming the hated party. One way out of this bind, for Zahra, may be revolt against it when she brings this story to me—a new authority on the scene. Zahra's enthusiasm for telling me this story, made clear through her repetition of it—suggests that there may be in it a "pleasure in protest" (Gilbert, 2016, p. 2). Describing LGBT students' multiple and contradictory pleasures in protesting against the authority of the school and in staging adolescent rebellion, Gilbert argues that researchers should read students acts of protest not only as "empirical proof" but also to explore what the narratives of protest might signify. And so, while Zahra's narrative of authority describes her interpretation of a lived experience of authority, I read in it her pleasure that comes from being able to retell this story from within overlapping spheres of authority—the school's and my own. Zahra's pleasurable protest—the breathless retelling of her narrative of failed authority—speaks to her ambivalence about authority, but it also offers a way of thinking about the way that conflict

can be a productive force in democratic politics, a way out of Mouffe's (2000) democratic paradox.

Conclusion

To conclude, I want to return to the scene that opened this chapter: the talent show skit, which mocks both authority (the teacher's and the principal's) and the failure of young people's authority simultaneously and exemplifies the tensions that pull at the notion of authority in student leadership and in high schools more broadly. Adam Phillips, drawing on Freud's work on jokes writes that "obstacles keep us safe, but the joke endangers us with excitement" (1995, p. 86). In other words, jokes allow us to momentarily take pleasure in something that is normally a source of conflict. But the conflict, or obstacle, has another role: "the obstacle provides us with an additional source of pleasure—the pleasure to be got from successfully circumventing the obstacle" (p. 86). The students' skit can be understood as a joke shared between the student leaders and the teachers and the laughter, their expression of pleasure both at having revealed student leadership as a safe and pleasurable, if conflicted, scene.

In the contemporary context, it's difficult to envision the school as a private realm, divorced from the public world of politics. However, even in the context of post-structuralist understandings of power and the political, Arendt's sequestration of children and schools to the private realm offers an important commentary on the aims and practices surrounding authority and democratic practice in schools since it highlights the complexity of the relationship between adults and young people. These are relationships that originate at home but that are worked out in school, and they hold the possibility of vulnerability,

responsibility, care, and love, but also, of intergenerational conflict, the necessary struggle of young people against adults. Adam Phillips (2002) working closely with Mouffe's argument from *The democratic paradox*, asks his reader to consider what it would be like if we made "conflict, and the pleasure conflict involves, the desirable and desired state of being" (p. 24). Rather than being an undesirable state of affairs, this conflict — arising from a recognition of young people's vulnerability — can be productive, allowing young people to develop a passionate attachment to the pleasure of protest, encouraging them to linger in conflict, and allowing it to shape their orientation toward the renewal of the world.

Chapter 7.

Happy Diversity and the Limits of Compromise

The Welcome Back assembly is one of the most anticipated events of the school year at Simcoe. It takes place in the first weeks of school, when the buzz in the hallways is still fresh and alive with late summer heat. On paper, it's an opportunity for the school's clubs and organizations to introduce themselves to the new students and to recruit new members, but the student council members all told me that the Welcome Back assembly was a high-stakes chance to set the tone for the year, to prove themselves as hype and fun. To do this, they needed to corral the clubs and groups to produce a fast-moving and entertaining show, and most importantly, they needed to come up with their own act, one that would live up to the high expectations set by previous councils.

The student council—Adia, Munira, Abby, Christie, Julie and Safiya—poured themselves into a video project full of in-jokes and pop-culture references and began recruiting the other acts for the assemblies—the clubs and groups that wanted to take part registered their interest and their idea for a short, informative performance. The returning members of the Mandarin club would perform a popular Mandarin pop song, for example, and the Art club would stage a game show quizzing students about the murals around the school. Rehearsals were set to begin the week before the assembly; but they were loosely organized, designed mostly to give groups a chance to test out the sound equipment and try their acts on the stage.

A few days before the first rehearsal for the welcome back assembly, Claire, who identified as queer and indigenous, and who was the head of the school's Queer Straight

Alliance (QSA), as well the art club, the library club, and the Aboriginal and Black students club, informed the student council of her plan for the QSA's act. I heard about it a few hours later — midway through a lunch-hour student council meeting, Adia, the student council's president, explained Claire's idea for the QSA presentation: all six members of the student council would stand up on stage wearing a different colour t-shirt, in a representation of the rainbow flag. Each student council member would recite a line explaining the symbolism of their colour as it relates to LGBTQ rights and activism.

Adia immediately dismissed the plan, stating matter-of-factly, "I can't do it." There was an exchange of glances and half-formed affirmations between Aida and Christie that allowed Adia to avoid saying why she couldn't do it—I would later learn that Adia and Safiya both felt that their religious beliefs prohibited them from supporting homosexuality, which is how they interpreted Claire's request. Like a lot of the diplomatic work of student council, this decision had already been made earlier that day in the school's backchannels—in the corners of classrooms and through text messages sent and received stealthily under desks. In a rapid-fire exchange in which the students spoke loudly over one another, a handful of alternatives were suggested and discarded. After a heated discussion, the substance of which was insulated by a constant stream of affirmations and agreements, the council settled on a plan in which the three non-Muslim members of the council would participate in the QSA's presentation, and Adia, Safiya, and Munira would not. Despite the self-congratulatory affirmations—the veneer of a happy ending—I sensed that everyone knew the solution was not good enough. I was surprised that Mr. Malone did not offer any intervention: while he claimed that he didn't usually take up LGBTQ activism in the school he had told me earlier: "yeah, yeah, the kids know [I'm] gay." I managed to hold my tongue, as well—partly in a

knee-jerk methodological attempt to stay neutral , and partly because this conflict felt—and continues to feel—dangerous and raw, a crack in the facade of the happy togetherness that seemed to permeate the council's work.

The first rehearsal for the Welcome Back assembly was two days later, on a Friday afternoon. Everything seemed normal. The late summer sun filtered through the auditorium's uncovered windows, turning the dust in the air into a slow-moving haze that the council members cut through, busily organizing schedules and microphone placements. The rehearsal was sparsely attended: only the Mandarin club and the school newspaper showed up to practice their acts, but this was not unusual—student councils often had to organize many rehearsals to give each act a chance to rehearse on stage. The raw tension of the last student council meeting had disappeared. I was left wondering if my assessment of the student council's response to Claire's proposal was exaggerated. But by the next rehearsal, on Monday after school, things seemed more unhinged. Adia arrived early but promptly left. Claire and the members of the clubs she was associated with boycotted the rehearsal: Claire had threatened to withdraw the many clubs she was involved with from the assembly unless the council agreed to her plan—a significant threat given the number of clubs this would affect and the high quality of their acts. Mr. Malone seemed on edge, barely greeting me when I approached him to say hello. Abby was unruly, overlaying the palpable tension with dramatic whoops, self-deprecating humour, and flailing dance moves. At the end of the rehearsal, the five council members present huddled at the front of the stage, discussing the growing crisis. Earlier that day, Munira had agreed to participate in the QSA's presentation, but the council members were still worried that Claire might not accept this olive branch and that the whole assembly would be cancelled. After all, Claire had demanded that the whole council

participate. And yet, Safiya picked a fight with Munira, arguing in rapid-fire dialogue that a compromise was inappropriate. Safiya was adamant and stern, scolding her friend: "You shouldn't compromise your religion."

I would later learn that over the weekend and into the next week, Adia and Safiya had been negotiating (separately) with Claire and Mr. Barney, the principal. Not only had Claire threatened to withdraw from the assembly entirely unless the whole student council participated in the QSA's presentation, she had invoked the school board's equity policy to legitimate her claims. Her teachers had disappointed her, pointing out that not even the board's equity policy could force the student council to "wear the shirts." Furthermore, the policies designed to prevent discrimination and oppression had also failed. At the eleventh hour, an uneasy compromise was reached. Munira would wear a colored shirt and participate in the act, and Safiya and Adia would introduce the QSA with some remarks about acceptance and difference.

The assembly was on Wednesday morning. Claire was present, accompanied by a small entourage and sipping tea from an oversized Starbucks cup. She seemed triumphantly cordial, as if she had claimed a position of having taken the high road. "Her" clubs' acts were memorable and polished. I felt a great weight of expectation when the QSA presentation finally began, but it was only me—the rest of the audience seemed unaware of the drama that anticipated the presentation. It unfolded just like any of the other acts. Munira, Juila, Abby, and Christie lined up on the stage, along with two other students, each of them dressed in a different rainbow colour. Munira wore a bright yellow hijab to match her yellow t-shirt. Adia and Safiya stood to the side, wearing taupe and black, and spoke their lines quickly but

politely: "At Simcoe, we have many religions—we don't have to agree with everyone but we have to respect everyone." The preamble, which had been vetted by Claire, turned the conflict away from homophobia and toward religious accommodation, and into the complicated territory of compromise and the nebulous realm of "respect." It was terse and pointed to a conflict that was still raw and unfinished—after all, respect is often a euphemism for the barest civility in the face of seething anger.

At centre stage, Claire, still gripping her giant Starbucks cup, turned to the colorfully dressed students lined up behind her. She rushed through a description of the QSA's mandate and the kind of activities they would do throughout the year (campy movie nights, potluck snack-fests, and planning the LBGTQ assembly in the spring). She seemed to have forgotten about the lines the colours in her living rainbow were supposed to deliver, so they just stood there, a living, smiling rainbow flag. "Well, here's your 2016-2017 student council!" she exclaimed, with a dramatic sweeping gesture and only a hint of disdain. It was over without a hitch.

Only it wasn't. The uneasy compromise that allowed the assembly to proceed had caused deep divisions in the council. It strained friendships and created a sense of distrust between students and teachers, revealing the vulnerabilities and wounds that discourses around diversity and compromise inflict upon the students who are called upon to circulate them. In the pages that follow, I unpack the practices intended to support "diversity" that I observed and heard about at Simcoe. This diversity work reflects a discourse of "happy diversity" as described by Sara Ahmed (2009). The chapter describes how the Canadian national fantasy of "happy diversity" — a vision of diversity that relies on attachments to

happy objects and conceals or refuses the unhappy or painful aspects of racial and religious diversity — shaped life at Simcoe and the political lives of the student council members. "Happy diversity" then, is often actually unhappy. I explore the influence of this discourse on the policies and practices around diversity at Simcoe, but also, the students' embodiment of this duty of Canadian citizenship. One of the central arguments of this chapter is that the unequal distribution of futurity amongst young people creates a paradox for the very students that diversity policies and practices are purported to serve. While participating in the emotional (and material) labour of "happy" diversity work, the students at Simcoe negotiated their own precarious identities within the conflicted, and often unhappy space of "happy diversity." My analysis focuses on the aftermath of the Welcome Back Assembly crisis: the fractured friendships, disappointments, and unhappy compromises that the students met as a result of this disagreement. Exploring the tension between the categorical political child as "diversity worker" and the actual experiences of "diversity" that these young people faced, I expose a cruel paradox. The national fantasy of "happy diversity," which these young people were enlisted not just to uphold but to project into the future, demands a futurity, a projection of a certain future existence, that excludes certain young people — black and brown children, but also disabled children and queer children — casting them as a threat to happy civil society. The unravelling of the happy traditions of diversity work at Simcoe unearthed the slippages and fractures that are built into institutional practices of diversity.

In this chapter, I ask: What is compromised when young people are in the service of "happy diversity"? If discourses of "happy diversity" produce a scene in which marginalized young people make concessions to preserve either their precarious

identifications or their precarious status as citizens of the future, then who is served by discourses of happy diversity, and the discourses about identity and recognition that underpin them? Thinking with these questions, and highlighting the emotional and relational challenges of "doing diversity" (Ahmed, 2009), I develop an argument that hinges around the notion of compromise amidst the fantasies of future citizenship in which racialized young people are precariously and tenuously included. The chapter takes identity as a focal point to further develop the argument, introduced in the previous chapters, that the futurity of the young citizen as an orientation to political life is in tension with the developmental and practical realities of young people's lives.

Happy Diversity

One of the goals of student leadership is to make schools safer and more inclusive (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). At Simcoe, diversity was a catch-all concept for achieving this goal. Throughout my fieldwork, I observed students in leadership roles speak frequently and powerfully of togetherness and the strength afforded by diversity; staff echoed this sentiment. At Simcoe, (and elsewhere in the city) student leaders were called upon—explicitly and implicitly—to advance a discourse of diversity in their schools. For example, the Simcoe student council members attended a diversity workshop presented by the school board; the workshop host encouraged the students to present the material from the workshop to the rest of the students in home-form presentations and to apply the workshop's lessons to their event planning. Using Sara Ahmed's term, I describe the students, in this context, as "diversity practitioners" (Ahmed, 2012): those members of

an institution who take on the role of representing diversity and doing diversity work within the institution.

Part of performing happy diversity is going along with the institutionally-mandated policies and programs that structure how diversity is understood and enacted. Sara Ahmed makes this point in her book *On Being Included* (2012), and the students at Simcoe—particularly the girls — took up this task, demonstrating attachments to the happy objects of diversity: the annual multicultural assembly was the grandest of these objects, but this also occurred on a smaller scale, for example: cultural food sales, and an "Ask-me-anything" event about wearing a hijab. Ahmed's book is a study of institutionally-commissioned diversity work in universities (equity policy development, for example); she argues diversity practitioners, the people (usually people of colour) who are charged with circulating an institutional message of diversity, are faced with a paradoxical, if not impossible task: they are simultaneously the problem *and* the solution. While the diversity work that Ahmed (2012) describes is discrete and compartmentalized—and this is part of what she argues makes it troublesome—at Simcoe Secondary School, diversity work also imbued the routines of daily life for the student leaders. It wasn't their only role; however, both students and staff understood it to be an implicit aspect of student leadership.

For many students at Simcoe, however, diversity was felt as structural injustice. They live in a world marked by anti-black racism, police violence, and Islamophobic hate crimes. And within their own school, structural racism is insidious: the teachers and administrative staff are almost all white, and until very recently, the school cafeteria did not serve halal food. The self-congratulatory celebration of racial diversity allowed the

students to celebrate the school's dubious accomplishment in being diverse (it is actually the demographic reality of school-district boundaries that is responsible for the school's racial diversity) while ignoring other kids of marginalization—in particular, homophobia and transphobia. In summary, the student leaders' investment in "happy" diversity has a double effect: it encourages them to minimize the real effects of racism in their lives, lest they disrupt the happiness of the diversity they are charged with circulating; and it masks the issues of homophobia, transphobia and gender-based discrimination. Nevertheless, when I asked the students I interviewed to give me their general impressions of their school, nearly all gave effusive praise of the school's diversity. In campaign speeches and post-election speeches, their rhetoric around family, togetherness, and diversity evoked a sense of warmth and optimism. Overall, the student leaders at Simcoe viewed togetherness across difference as a key part of what makes school better, and they understood themselves as facilitators of this. In other words, the version of diversity that they were responsible for circulating was "happy diversity" (Ahmed, 2012).

I want to take this a step further and argue that, at least in the context of a public school in Canada, happy diversity is not just an institutional duty but a duty of citizenship. To perform the futurity of their citizenship — to embody their roles as citizens of the future — the student leaders at Simcoe were charged with ushering this fantasy of the Canadian state into a happy future. The diversity work undertaken by the student council at Simcoe is thus constitutive of the Canadian fantasy of "happy diversity" — the fantasy of a discourse of diversity free from the presence and the effects of oppression, inequality, and injustice (Bickmore, 2005; Coates, 2015; Ferguson, 2011). This particularly Canadian fantasy imagines a happy future while erasing or denying the past and present realities

about diversity in Canada: the fact that for many Canadian residents, both past and present, diversity is not experienced as "happy" at all, nor does the future point to a promising resolution. Ahmed (2010) explains this situation in terms of the psychic costs of the pervasive demands of happiness — the demands of a happily multicultural society produce a figure she describes as the melancholic migrant, for whom "suffering becomes a way of holding on to a lost object." (Ahmed, 2010, p. 142). In Ahmed's example, the movie *Bend it like Beckham,* the child plays a particularly important role. The film is about an Indian family living in Britain. The youngest daughter, Jess, is a very good football player, and her father was once an excellent cricketer but was turned off the sport after experiencing racist taunts. The conflict revolves around whether the father will allow Jess to keep playing football, facilitating her proximity to the happy multiculturalism that the sport represents in the film, or whether he will forbid it, projecting his racism-based unhappiness onto his daughter's experience as an immigrant. Ahmed's identifies the father as an example of what she calls the "melancholic migrant"—the newcomer who is a thorn in the side of the happy multicultural society (Ahmed, 2010). The melancholic migrant "holds on not simply to difference, to what keeps him apart, but also to the unhappiness of difference as an historical itinerary" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 143). In contrast to the melancholic migrant is the child of happy diversity. In *Bend it like Beckham*, where the father's relation to diversity is an unhappy one, Jess's character is imagined in proximity to happiness and happy diversity. The father cannot "get over" racism; this task of bringing happy diversity into the future falls to Jess. In Ahmed's other examples, drawn from literature and popular culture, a generational gap features prominently in stories of melancholic migrants. While older characters are unable or unwilling to let go of racism as an unhappy object, thus becoming

unhappy objects themselves, young characters — their youth representing hope and optimism — are shown as taking up the moral duty to uphold the national fantasy of happy diversity through their proximity to "happy" objects like football. In the "happy" fictional worlds that Ahmed (2012) presents, young people's orientations toward diversity are, to extend Ahmed's reading of these texts, unfettered by attachments to unhappy objects; their participation in diversity thus remains unspoilt. This duty translates to the political worlds of public institutions. According to Ahmed (2012), diversity practitioners in such institutions have a duty to transform diversity into happy object, rather than a troublesome one. She writes: "the idea that race equality is a positive duty thus translates quickly into an institutional duty for people of color not to dwell on the negative experiences of racism. The institutional duty is a "'happiness duty'" (p. 156).

Ahmed is writing in the context of the UK; in Canada, the fantasy of a happy, painless diversity is also pervasive, as it is enshrined in policy as well as in popular and pedagogic visions of Canada. These fantasies depend not just on a particular conception of the state but also on a particular understanding of the Child as a concept. It is when the children in Ahmed's examples come into proximity with Britishness, or in other words, with whiteness, that they become part of a future of "happy diversity". This reflects the tenuousness of the child's place in the fantasy of the diverse state — it relies on her proximity or attachment to the happy future of whiteness. The "child citizen" of happy diversity is thus not a position open to all children equally and in the same way. Young people of colour and other minoritized children represent a different kind of future than what is conjured up by the fantasy of the "citizen of the future."

This discrepancy is at the heart of Ta-Nehisi Coates' (2015) argument in his book *Between the World and Me,* written in the form of a letter to his teenage son. Coates describes futurity in terms of a Dream; a fantasy of happy futurity that is made blatantly unavailable to Black Americans. While Coate's focus on the child is often implied, Maureen Moynaugh's (2014) work about Omar Khadr, the teenager detained in Guantanamo Bay for the combat killing of a US army captain in Afghanistan, takes up the case of the child more directly. She argues that child soldiers present a limit case for the figure of the "universalized child" who, unlike child soldiers like Khadr, is always deserving of protection. This case highlights the potentially contradictory positions that black and brown children inhabit, in irregular situations, such as battlegrounds, but also in more familiar, mundane settings, like the school.

The very notion of "the child" is influenced by race and gender, as Ann Ferguson's powerful ethnography of the disciplinary practices in a middle school shows. She writes, "what it means to be a child varies dramatically by virtue of location in cross-cutting categories of class, gender, and race. [...] "African American boys [...] are doubly displaced: as black children, they are not seen as childlike but adultified" (Ferguson, 2000, p. 79-80). The "adultification" of black boys strips away the orientation toward a happy future that other children enjoy, and they become "children who are not children… boys who are already men." Ferguson's focus on African American boys is important for my study. Almost all the students at Simcoe were racialized. Many of the girls in the student council found ways to work around the foreclosure of futurity that Ferguson describes: they excelled in school, participated in extracurriculars, and for the most part, performed disinterest in sexuality. On the other hand, the teachers at Simcoe complained often that

they could not recruit enough boys for leadership activities, and in one of the election cycles I observed, only three of the twenty candidates were boys. The boys seemed to avoid most encounters with leadership. Like the trouble-makers in Ferguson's study, who were dismissed by the institution as having no future, many of the boys at Simcoe did not place themselves into positions that presumed their role as part of a happily diverse Canadian future.

In contrast with the conceptual child citizen, who signals a taken-for-granted futurity and a kind of political purity, racialized children in the realm of politics serve as a reminder of the pernicious *un*happy reality of racism and oppression. For these children, the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship are not given, but earned, precariously, through alignment with certain markers of Canadian-ness or whiteness. While the concept of the young citizen of the future is, by virtue of her whiteness, a happy symbol of peaceful, liberal progress, the young people of colour who might also take up this position encounter it as violent — a hope for the future that makes a point of excluding bodies like theirs.

Many of the young people at Simcoe found ways to align themselves with the demands of "happy diversity", and yet the crisis around the Welcome Back assembly revealed the *un*happiness that coexisted with happy diversity at Simcoe. My discussions with the students following the welcome back assembly ordeal show how this conflict — a failure of the kind of conciliatory politics that I described in Chapter six — derailed the precarious "happiness" of diversity at Simcoe. Instead, it exposed it as kind of "cruel optimism" (Berlant, 2012) — a scene in which a desired thing or situation is actually an

obstacle to one's flourishing. In other words, the fantasy of "happy diversity" was in fact a barrier to the kind of flourishing that it conjures up.

Many of the students at Simcoe performed happy diversity by going along with its demands for uncomplaining erasure of the injurious effects of racism. Interestingly, Claire, who positioned herself at the margins of leadership at Simcoe, did not "go along" (Ahmed, 2012) with the circulation of happy diversity. Claire took on many leadership roles outside of the student council. She was the head of the art club, the library club, the QSA, the co-head of the Aboriginal and Black students club, and member of various ad-hoc committees and consultations. In interviews, she often referred to the clubs she was associated with as "her clubs" and the members as "her people" or "her members." Perhaps this allowed her to control the narrative of her leadership—in making these clubs hers rather than the institution's, she didn't have to conform with the institutional demand for happy diversity. She did not participate in more centrally organized student leadership opportunities, like the school's peer leader programme or the student council—situations in which she might have felt compelled to go along with the narrative of happy diversity or risk causing a disturbance or being blamed for interrupting the happiness of diversity. Perhaps it was her way around the dilemma posed by Ahmed (2012): "when you are less friendly, you are more likely to be blocked" (p. 156). In our conversations, Claire often praised the diverse environment at Simcoe, especially in contrast to other schools. But she also resisted the narrative of happy diversity. Even though she *could* pass for white, she emphatically rejected the opportunity to perform as the *right* kind of minority.

Recognition, Multiculturalism and Happy Diversity

Happy diversity, at Simcoe and elsewhere, is underpinned by a politics of recognition, which is, in turn, the foundational plank of multiculturalism. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 codified Canada's official policy of multiculturalism, solidifying the preservation of racial, ethnic, and religious, diversity as part of a national "grand narrative" (Schecter, et al. 2014, p. 138). The policy points to the importance of developing knowledge of the Other, through increased contact and cultural knowledge as a way to promote the preservation of diversity (James & Schecter, 2000, p. 29). While James and Schecter note that in Ontario, anti-racist policies began to replace multicultural approaches to pedagogy and policy in the 1990s, several scholars have cautioned that even still, traces of a Euro-centric multiculturalism remain and continue to obscure the structural inequities in Ontario's school system (Rezai-Rashti, et al., 2017; Winton, 2008).

Charles Taylor's argument that recognition is at the centre of a just multicultural identitarian politics takes up the question of knowledge as recognition raised by the Canadian Multicultural Act — questions that can be related to the Act's applications in education. He writes: "Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by *misrecognition* of other, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, read distortion, if the people or society *mirror back to* them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves." (Tayor, 1996, p. 75). Having one's identity recognized—and not *misrecognized*—is, in this commonsense, "folk paradigm of justice" (Fraser, 1997)—central to identity development and a sense of dignity. In this approach to social justice, recognition is not just prophylactic—it is also reparative: "It is commonly held that injustice is caused by misrecognition of people and that the remedy for such misrecognition is a dose of positive recognition" (Bingham, 2006, p. 327). The implication

here, underwritten by multiculturalist policy, is that by getting to know the Other so that one can recognize her, rather than *misrecognize her,* recognitive justice will be achieved.

At Simcoe Secondary, a discourse of recognition was the organizing principle behind a range of school-sanctioned, didactic events like the diversity training sessions delivered by peer leaders to grade nine home forms and an equity workshop offered to student council members by a school board official. It also made its way into the students' own understandings of leadership.

As a part of their tenure as student leaders, all student council members were required to attend an equity workshop. The workshop took place at Simcoe and was attended by the six student council members as well as student council groups from six other schools in the region. Similar workshops took place across the city, so that each council ended up taking part in an equity workshop at some point. A similar but abbreviated version of the workshop was offered in all grade nine home forms at Simcoe. The equity workshop operated along a pedagogical principle that emphasized recognition as a pathway to social justice. Many of the activities revolved around a reveal—the workshop's facilitator would set up a situation that would ostensibly play into the students' bias or tendency to misrecognize and then reveal a truth that would challenge the students' misrecognition. In one activity, the facilitator posted cards around the room labelled with categories like, "ex-con," "professional athlete," "lawyer," "disabled person" and "refugee." She then asked the students to think about who they'd like to sit beside on a 24-hour flight and stand beside that card. After the students had grouped themselves around the cards around the room, she walked about, asking them to explain their reasoning — students had

largely grouped themselves around the characters they perceived as needing help: the disabled person or the refugee. Finally, she turned the labelled cards over to reveal the ways that students had *misrecognized* their imagined seatmate: the ex-con turned out to be Martha Stewart; the professional athlete, a female wheelchair basketball Olympian; the refugee, Albert Einstein, and so on. The exercise ended with the reveal: there was no discussion of what it might mean to be misrecognized or the structural contexts that might lead to misrecognition or that might allow for positive recognition. Exercises like this one entrenched the curriculum of recognition at Simcoe—the lack of discussion left little room for students to complicate or disrupt this approach to diversity. Furthermore, there was little discussion of the effects of misrecognition and how it might shape young people's experiences of citizenship or political action. The exercise did not provide space for allowing the students to explore how they might feel misrecognized; how their classification as "leader" or, in other words, "citizen of tomorrow" might itself be limited or even foreclosed by misrecognitions. Instead, the students were encouraged to incorporate this lesson into their understanding of leadership by producing a reflection on their own biases. The focus on recognition as reparative, and on abstract and unlikely scenarios, like being seated next to an Olympian or Albert Einstein on a flight, is an example of the production and reproduction of "happy diversity" as the "right" kind of diversity work. Conversely, the omission of a space for discussing "unhappy" experiences of racial and religious discrimination marks those experiences as problematic; a barrier to the solution or the reparative process instituted and legitimized through the authority of the school.

Prospective and actual members of the student council complied with this institutionally legitimized discourse: the recognitive approach to "happy diversity"

presented itself in the student council members' (and prospective student council members') expressed wish that the student body would experience something like "togetherness." All the student council members I interacted with told me that one of the student council's principal roles was to bring students together across difference, uniting a divided student body. They used this sense of togetherness as a metric of their success, and they also used it to judge previous student councils.

The students' campaign materials, especially their speeches, provided a good example of how the students performed the relationship between recognition and "happy diversity"—at the pre-election assembly, nearly every candidate's speech promised to bring students together as one, to create unity, to bridge divides between students, or to make the school feel more like a family. Similarly, the students I interviewed clung to the school's annual multicultural assembly as one of the most important and positive moments of the year. In this excerpt, Adia describes how this annual event is singular in its ability to make school better by bringing the students together.

> Adia: …And like, I think that we have things that bring us together. And make us like Simcoe more. I don't know if you were here for the multicultural assembly? Everyone loved that day, and everyone was so, 'Oh, I'm so glad I'm at Simcoe, this is the greatest thing ever.' But I feel like we don't have enough of those maybe, because once you get past that, it's like, ugh. [deep sigh] You know.

Adia presents the multicultural assembly as a moment of unity amongst students—one of the successes of the diversity work that she is enlisted to undertake—and it is only a sense of togetherness that is able to make school more tolerable. During the multicultural

assembly, "happy" diversity (Ahmed, 2012) temporarily obscures the material realities of a broader cultural context that is often unjust and often cruel. Adia recognizes the impermanence of the multicultural assembly's happy effect: "Once you get past that, it's like, ugh." But her ambivalence doesn't allow her to reject the concept altogether—instead, she suggests that what the school needs is *more* of these happy moments in which students could come to know and recognize one another. I had indeed been at the multicultural assembly — I watched it from the balcony, surrounded by boisterous students, who cheered loudly for each act. Students of every shape and size took the stage to perform songs and dances — the audience cheered for everyone, bold or timid, fat or thin, talented or not. My notes echo Adia's sentiments: I wrote that while sitting in the audience, one might have the sense that it represented a paragon of success in multicultural education. Here were hundreds of happy young people, respectfully enjoying, or even delighting in their peers' expressions of their cultures. I didn't include it in my notes — I felt sheepish about my vulnerability to sentimentality — but the moment left me with a lump in my throat.

The campaign speeches and Adia's reflections on the multicultural assembly show the student leaders embrace of the discourses of recognition and diversity that structured diversity work in the school. Called upon to circulate these discourses as bearers and embodiments of "happy diversity", the student leaders used them as markers of success. But the welcome back assembly's unresolved tension indicates the limits of the recognitive approach and the "happy diversity" work that serves it.

Scholars have explored the tensions around "happy diversity" and its imbrication with the multiculturalist politics of recognition using a variety of critical lenses: for example, Parekh (2004) and Fraser (1997) describe this tension from a Marxist perspective, focusing on the unequal distribution of capital across racial and ethnic groups, rather than describing it as a problem of recognition. Arguing that the legitimization of the concept of recognition points to the dominance of a liberal, Western understanding of the subject, Bhabha (1998) critiques this approach from a post-colonial, poststructuralist perspective. My analysis of the tensions I observed in the diversity work that took place at Simcoe considers these critiques, which are implicit in Ahmed's work as well; however, I turn my focus more directly to theories of adolescence and of emotional life to help understand differently the question of recognition, and how it went awry in the run-up to and aftermath of the welcome back assembly at Simcoe.

The emotional dynamics of young people's particular affective positions—the often-rocky developmental terrain of adolescence—complicate the assumptions upon which the recognitive paradigm is founded. In her work on prejudice and adolescence, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (1996) focuses on these emotional stakes. In her work, she avoids the "happy" euphemisms, "diversity" and multiculturalism, and writes directly about their problem: prejudice. She cautions against approaches to diversity that rest solely on the sociological and the structural, writing: "a theory that holds, in effect, that unfamiliarity between groups breeds contempt—and posits that familiarity will breed respect—speaks to the problem of ethnocentrism but not to complexes of feelings and images of the "Other" that are unconscious, as resistant to familiarity as the unconscious is to reasoned arguments or progressive social visions" (p. 96). In other words, in order to understand

the failures or the limits of commonsense approaches to diversity, Young-Bruehl contends that we must consider its emotional and relational dimensions.

Between recognition and misrecognition: Empathy and Compromise

In my view, the affective relation most compatible with a paradigm of recognition is empathy, which invokes the complexities of identifying with the Other. Appeals to empathy imbued the work of recognition at Simcoe. Considering the exercises offered to the students in the diversity workshop I described earlier, along with the students' promises and wishes that they might achieve a sense of unity and togetherness by understanding and accepting each other's differences, empathy emerged as a key affective orientation to diversity and recognition at Simcoe. Megan Boler (1998) suggests "empathy [has been] promoted as a bridge between differences, the affective reason for engaging in democratic dialogue with the other" (p. 181). In other words, empathy is the link between proximity to the Other and recognition; a prophylactic against misrecognition. However, the idea that empathy can result in an ethical encounter or meaningful social change is also subject to critique. Boler argues that because empathy reflects a search for sameness in the Other's vulnerability (i.e. I understand what you are feeling because I recognize that the same suffering could befall me), it is unlikely to result in the discomfort that is required for real social change. Similarly, Sharon Todd (2003) describes the paradoxical notion that empathy may in fact become an identification with the self, rather than with the other. When we feel empathy for another's struggle, she claims, "we invest the other with bits of ourselves—our histories, qualities, and attributes. [...] And since empathy is a psychic event where one's own conflicts, desires, and ambivalences are projected into another, the

movement of learning becomes a relation of self to self"(p. 55). In our work to recognize the other, then, we may *misrecognize* her as ourselves. As both Boler and Todd suggest here, the challenge of empathy is one of identification and compromise—the demands of identification in an empathetic relation require an investment beyond the self. If empathy is to move beyond the self, then it requires breaking down the "self to self" relation that Todd describes or giving in to the demanding intrusion of the Other into this indentifactory loop. Taking my cues from conversations with the students at Simcoe, I identify compromise as an affective sticking point and a useful concept for thinking about the tensions and contradictions that roiled the "happy" sheen of diversity and recognition.

Compromise can be understood as the logical but troublesome terminus of the politics of recognition that I argue structures "happy" diversity work at Simcoe Secondary School. However, it is complicated by the multiple, overlapping identifications that are part of collective life (Van Leeuwen, 2015) and by the complex developmental terrain of adolescence. Compromise can also feel like a bit of a disappointment, perhaps because it carries with it the weight of concession; to compromise means to make a concession to the other, but it is a two-way operation: to compromise might also mean that, as someone makes a compromise with us, we are compromised. Despite this, compromise is a fact of life: it is how we reconcile the self with the exterior world and how we tolerate reproaches from within and without; it allows us to escape rigidity in categorization and in thought, and to live with change and unpredictability. Compromise, like identification and other affective and psychic processes, does not happen in a vacuum. The material conditions of daily life and the sedimentation of personal and social histories impinge upon what compromise can look like and how it affects those who engage in it. My analysis of my

interview with Safiya about the welcome back assembly, which I discuss below, traces the conflicted and uneasy spaces where recognition, identification, compromise and diversity overlapped and collided. This uncomfortable space revealed the limits of political futurity and citizenship within the context of "happy diversity."

Recognition refused: identification and recognition

My conversation with Safiya about the welcome back assembly felt urgent and generous, in marked contrast with most of my earlier experiences interviewing this group of students (including Safiya herself) whose clipped answers, restless fidgeting and phone-ward glances I'd interpreted as signs that they'd rather end the interview quickly. This time, Safiya's phone buzzed throughout this interview but she ignored it, and our interview lasted over ninety minutes, more than double the length of a typical interview. After several minutes of chatting about the assembly—a discussion of some technical difficulties, a student who made some clever jokes, and the poorly attended rehearsals—I finally brought up the conflict around the QSA's presentation directly. As soon as I mentioned the "tension," as I called it in that moment, Safiya almost *couldn't* stop talking about it. She circled back to it again and again, even when our conversation had moved to another topic, and her responses to my prompts were long, expansive, and emotionally fraught. In the segment reproduced below, Safiya opens her response to my open-ended question about "the tension" with an ambivalent claim of friendship and admiration for Claire. I interpret her ambivalence as a representation of the conflict between the experience of relating to her friends as a matter of identification and the experience of this relationship as a matter of diversity.

> Safiya: So me and Claire are good friends. I knew that she was always qu- kue- I don't know how to say that word properly. But, you know? And I never had a problem with her. Um, so we were good friends. We [inaudible, laughter] everything, and I like her, she's really funny, and she's really smart. You know? And we were a good group for science, like, last year we were in a group together. So we knew each other a lot, you know?

Safiya initially locates her friendship with Claire in the present by saying "me and Claire *are* good friends." But this changes as she struggles to articulate Claire's queerness. Although Safiya speaks unmarked Canadian English, throughout our interview she was unable to say the word "queer," stumbling through it or pronouncing it "cue-weer." After this disavowal of Claire's queerness, Safiya alters her framing of her friendship with Claire, casting it into the past by repeating her initial claim in the past tense: "Um, so we *were* good friends." Safiya's shifting grammar allows Claire's admirable qualities to persist into the present—perhaps as something that could be returned to in another time or another life—but their intimacy ends with Safiya's inability to recognize and name Claire as queer.

Claire's public demand for recognition (via the QSA presentation) echoed the messages of unity and togetherness that were so pervasive in the diversity work of student leaders. She asked the student council members to embody this discourse by inhabiting queerness, literally trying it on by wearing the colors of the rainbow flag, and by doing so, she asked them to identify with her and her struggle for recognition, becoming her. For Safiya, this was too much to endure—she struggled to identify with her queer friend and maintain a coherent identity, which she had staked to a homophobic version of Muslim-

ness. Too try on queerness, by wearing a coloured shirt and joining the rainbow or by articulating the word "queer," would have required an identification with Claire that threatened an adolescent coherence that was linked strongly to an identification with a robust and powerful group—the religious majority in her school and community. And so, she refused both intimacy with Claire and, in the process, her identification with "happy" diversity work. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (1996) writes that "adolescents relate by assimilating themselves to their objects, taking on everything from manners and gestures to habits and emotions" (p. 306). In other words, adolescents do the work of becoming themselves partly by *becoming* their objects—in particular, their friends. But adolescents also identify with social groups, experienced as a large or powerful people, as they provide "a kind of external superego" (Young-Bruehl, 1996, p. 310). Young-Bruehl focuses on gangs, but I think we can also include more benign kinds of peer groups as well—teams, cliques, and even groups whose organizing principles exist outside of the school, like religious or cultural groups. This tension of identification, the pull between identification with a close friend and with a social group also reflects the psychic costs of compromise and empathy. Safiya spent much of the following ninety minutes talking through her decision not to support Claire's QSA presentation, often acknowledging the principles of the diversity work she was refusing.

Later in the interview, Safiya describes her own struggles as a hijabi athlete:

> Safiya: Like, it doesn't come easy, that, and that's what I told Claire. I told Claire, I know how you feel, I know how it feels to be different. You know. And I think

> it's different. I understand everyone has a different— My struggle's not the same as her struggle but we both are struggling for something that we want to be. I guess she didn't hear that, maybe. I don't know. And like, living, like, in this school, you don't see that kind of struggle from Muslim people, right? Everyone's Muslim. That's why probably Mr. Malone, or, or the teacher didn't see that as a big deal for us. So I dunno.

Safiya framed the struggles that both she and Claire face in terms of recognition: they are both struggling "for something that we want to be." But she also staked out the limits of recognition: at Simcoe, "everyone's" Muslim. It is not hard to be recognized as Muslim at Simcoe, but it is not enough. For Safiya, recognition alone was not sufficient, given that the work of happy diversity in the school functions to obscure her struggle. To preserve her own struggle within this discourse, Safiya must ultimately renounce Claire's. Bound up in Safiya's contradictory identifications is a gesture toward empathy—she claims that she "knows how [she] feels" and she "knows how it feels to be different," and she also signals toward their difference, stating that she understands that "everyone has a different. My struggle's not the same as her struggle." This highlights the connection between recognition and empathy, and the way that identification might be understood as an uncertain bridge between the two.

Initially, Adia, Safiya, and Munira, the three Muslim members of the student council refused to take part in the QSA's presentation. As the conflict unfolded, teachers got involved and urged the two parties to reach a compromise, and they appeared to, albeit,

reluctantly: the non-participating student council members would stand on the stage, off to the side, and read a preamble to the QSA's presentation. Claire would vet the preamble in advance. The day before the assembly, though, Munira spoke with Claire personally, and easily agreed to "wear the shirt," in other words, to take part in the QSA's presentation. For Munira, wearing the shirt and participating in Claire's presentation was a non-issue: she claimed repeatedly, both to me and to her fellow council members, that she did not feel like her participation in the presentation was a compromise of her Muslim identity. Unlike the other council members, Munira was not a friend of Claire's; she was less affronted by Claire's demand, and described it to me like this: "I just thought it would look really pretty up there on the stage." She did not feel like she had conceded any part of herself to Claire's indentifactory project.

For Safiya, however, the notion of compromise seemed deeply injurious. Tellingly, I think, it wasn't the "meat" of the compromise that vexed her, but the fact of having compromised, and in turn, feeling compromised. While she disavowed Claire's queerness, Safiya told me several times that she agreed with what she had written and read in the preamble to the QSA presentation—that she really did believe that everyone deserved respect—and she acknowledged that queer youth were a maligned at Simcoe and could probably benefit from the support from some visible, non-queer Muslim students, like those in the student council. Moreover, she spoke poignantly about how she and Claire were alike in their struggle to claim an identity. This piece of dialogue, below, comes from a section of the interview where Safiya was describing her participation in league sports and boxing.

> Safiya: I told Claire, I know how you feel, I know how it feels to be different. […] My struggle's not the same as her struggle but we both are struggling for something that we want to be.

Safiya understands Claire's struggle by mapping it against her own struggle, which she described to me in terms of her trying to fit in as a hijabi athlete. I interpret Safiya's empathy here with help from Sharon Todd's (2003) concept of "projective empathy," in which the "movement of learning is a relation of self to self" (p. 55). In seeing and learning about herself through the intellectual exercise of putting herself in Claire's shoes, Safiya's approach to compromise becomes similarly self-directed. Rather than being understood as acts of generosity, concessions seem more like whittling away of the self.

In the next section, Safiya extends her discussion of the relationship between identity and compromise by staking out a distinction between compromise and being compromised.

> Safiya: Like what I said? that was fine. But like, for someone to tell me that that's the compromise? Is what I didn't like. It's like, cause that's what you agreed on, even if it was a compromise, I don't want to hear that because that means that I lived seventeen years of my life trying to practice my religion in this country and all of the sudden for one thing I have to compromise. That's why I didn't like that.

Later on, she returns to the "compromise" abruptly in the middle of a conversation about a hockey game.

Safiya: Right? So, that's where I find it really hard. Saying that's it's ok for me to compromise something right? And so I dunno.

Jenn: Even though you did agree? You were saying what you agreed with?

Safiya: I was like, yeah, I would say it but for them to say that, yeah, it's just a compromise. Means that I cannot—they'll make me always compromise, and that's where it's not ok.

What does it mean to be able to survive compromise; to survive being compromised? For Safiya, compromise feels like a threat—the threat of being undone by the Other. She speaks in ways that gesture toward empathy—she is able to say: I respect you and recognize you—but her empathy is circumscribed by projection; the difference between the self and the Other is eliminated. Todd (2003) notes that empathy as projection "is unable to open itself fully to the revelation of alterity; its impulse is to overcome difference" (p. 57). Perhaps it is the impulse to overcome or to elide difference that makes the threat of compromise so menacing: to give up something to the other would also mean to give up something of a fragile, adolescent self. When Safiya says, "Means that I cannot, they'll always make me compromise," I interpret in this a suggestion that her developing personhood cannot survive making concessions to the Other and an anxiety about the coherence of the self in the face of an unsettling relation. A compromise might be seen as a whittling away of the integrity of the group or organizing principle or strong

individual figure with whom an adolescent has identified in the process of separating from her family life, and consequently, a whittling away of the self.

These passages point to the precarity, or perhaps the cruelty, of the promise of futurity for young minoritized citizens. Safiya's comments reach beyond the school, the Welcome Back assembly, and her relationship with Claire, and point to the characteristics that make citizenship a given. The 17 years she had spent living in Canada—her whole life—had not earned her the futurity that "happy diversity" promises, instead, it demands painful compromise. In other words, the "happy diversity" demanded through the policy and pedagogy requires the erasure of the pain of compromise. It assumes that a particular vision of diversity is "happy" all around, when it is actually an annihilating prospect for some. Ceding to happy diversity, as Claire was asking Safiya to do, is felt as a foreclosure of futurity rather than an affirmation of future citizenship. For Safiya, and likely for many other black and brown "citizens of the future," accepting the compromises required by the national fantasy of happy diversity would actually signal a dead end.

Conclusion

Overall, this story might be about the failure of the recognitive paradigm to do what it sets out to do in high schools. The conflict between the student council members and the head of the QSA was not resolved to anyone's satisfaction. Friendships were lost, students and teachers were disappointed, everyone felt their rights had been violated, and no one felt that their struggle for dignity had been recognized. At Simcoe, and in student leadership and student voice programming more generally, student leaders are often compelled to take on the work of diversity in their institutions. This means "getting on

board" (Ahmed, 2012) with the happy work of diversity within the context of a politics of recognition. However, as I have shown in my analysis of the pedagogical practices around diversity work and one student's resistance to the compromises that such work entails, for many students "getting on board" means signing up for a future in which they are only precariously included, if at all. The very figure of the "citizen of the future" then, hinges on the affective fantasies of recognition and empathetic identifications that exclude so many racialized and minoritized young people from this vision of futurity. I am not arguing for an abandonment of diversity work in schools; however, I ask, what is it about young people and adolescents that makes adults imagine them as ideal candidates for diversity work when their emotional lives are so often at odds with its demands? And what might it take for this work to consider the complicated terrain of young people's emotional lives?

Chapter 8

Conclusion: Growing Up and Out

Close to thirty prospective student council members gathered in a classroom near the end of the school year to declare their candidacy. By the next week, the halls would once again be plastered with hand-made posters, and these candidates would be dishing out cupcakes and optimistic slogans about unity, belonging, and school spirit. But for now, they were seated in rows of desks, listening to Mr. Malone describe the intricacies of the election process: no more than 50 numbered and signed campaign posters, mandatory meetings, a support form, signed by a teacher, a speech of no more than two minutes for most positions, or five minutes for the president, to be vetted in advance by a teacher. A few members of the outgoing student council were also on hand, seated at the front of the classroom: Adia was sitting on the teacher's desk, and the others were leaning back in chairs gathered around her. They interrupted Mr. Malone's speech from time to time, offering suggestions or confirming his advice. Before long, Mr. Malone strayed from the procedural details, and began a familiar (to me) lecture about the depth of responsibility required of student council members. Mr. Malone described some of the student council's most important responsibilities, a list culminating with the council's responsibility to represent the school to visiting dignitaries and important officials. At this, Adia turned to Julia and Safiya, the council members sitting next to her, and remarked, with a smirk: "You mean, talking to white people?" Julia and Safiya chuckled, but none of the hopeful candidates reacted, even though Adia's comment was loud enough for everyone to hear. Mr. Malone, with his back to the outgoing council and facing the candidates for the new one, carried on as if he hadn't heard a thing.

My dissertation ends with a scene of new beginnings, but also of departure: Adia, Julia, Safiya, and the rest of the council were headed toward a future outside of public schooling, just as a new group of students was investing themselves in the promise of young citizenship. The council's demeanor at this meeting stood in contrast with the new candidates' optimism: a week later, the new candidates would go on to give speeches with the same themes of unity and togetherness that had anchored the campaign speeches that Adia and the rest of the council had delivered a year earlier. There were subtle shifts: the "Make Simcoe Great Again" thread had disappeared, for instance, but now, Adia, Julia, and the rest of the council would the ones rolling their eyes and smirking at the campaigners' impractical promises and inspirational sloganeering, just as Dina and Alicia had done when Adia and Julia had made their speeches the year before.

The timeframe for my research meant that I was in the field at Simcoe for two election cycles; this also meant that I observed the departure of two groups of students from the world of student leadership in high school; in both cases the transition out of student leadership was marked by a sense of growing up and growing out of the student council. The student council had begun their year by embracing the promise of youth citizenship — opening their tenure with a powerful dance and slam-poetry mash-up, featuring Beyoncé's empowerment hit, "Girls Rule the World," performed at the previous year's end-of-year assembly, for example — but now, Adia cynically joked about the council's role. The previous year, I had struggled to set up interviews with the outgoing members of the council after the election day. Dina and Zahra had ignored my messages and avoided eye contact when I passed them in the halls, and when I finally met with Alicia, she

seemed absent, giving uncharacteristically brief answers. When I asked her to reflect on the year and on how her thoughts about student council had changed, she said she'd already forgotten about the beginning of the year; later, when I asked about the new council, she said, "There's already drama, but like, it's just [student council]. It's not that big of a deal."

These scenes of departure bring together some of the important themes from my research and point to some questions about young people's political futurity that remain unanswered by my dissertation. They highlight the impermanence of youth and of youth citizenship, as well as its connection — at least in my research — to the school and the way that the institution of schooling produces and sustains the kinds of relations between adults and youth that make the construct of youth citizenship possible.

At the end of the year, relieved of the duties of youth citizenship and released from the institution of public schooling, Adia could call out the way that the school put the student council in the service of a particular version of diversity and youth citizenship; Alicia had already diminished the work of the student council as forgettable and unimportant: the stuff of petty teenage disputes. For both students, it seemed that their impending graduation meant that they no longer needed to perform the role of student for me, for their teachers, or for the other students. Their futures were no longer connected to the school or to the institution of public schooling, and its version of citizenship, but to something new.

Youth citizenship is a construct of the adult world. Though young people may and do enact citizenship outside of the institutions of schooling and, they do so in the context of a political world dominated by adult concerns (Young-Bruehl, 2012). However, in my research, citizenship and young people's political lives were bounded by the relationships,

policies, and discourses that make up the institution of public schooling. In other words, the young people who take up institutionalized versions of youth citizenship do so within the limitations of the adult world, aligning themselves not only with the discursive understandings of what citizenship means in a particular institution but also with the affective needs that youth citizenship satisfies in those adult-oriented context. Because the school derives its affective intensity from the binary of adult/not adult, in other worlds, from the dynamics of the contingent relationship between adults and young people, so too does youth citizenship and youth leadership in this context.

Taken as a whole, my dissertation shows that youth citizenship and student leadership at Simcoe was deeply enmeshed in with the traditions and the affective life of the school. The young people who took up this version of youth citizenship used the institution of schooling — for some, being a "good student" was part of their identity — but more generally, the school provided a staging ground for a struggle against adult authority and against the demands of their own impending adulthood. And just as young people used the institution of schooling as an arena for their ambivalence about adults and their own adulthood, the school's adult realm needed youth to sustain its force.

Within this scene of interdependence lies a contradiction: The task of adolescence is to separate from adult authority at the same time as becoming adult (Waddell, 1998). This developmental task frames the way that young people approach their enactment of youth citizenship. Throughout my research, I observed young people bring this ambivalence to the pressing, material problems of their day-to-day lives: both Safiya and Claire struggled against the discourses of "happy diversity" (Ahmed, 2012) as they made sense of their own roles in the politics of diversity; the peer leaders' camp skit skewering both their own and

the teachers' authority revealed their ambivalence about the responsibilities of adulthood; and the council's enthusiasm about the Glencrest House fundraiser suggested that the members' perception of themselves as citizens was shaped by the tension between their own lives and the affective political dynamics of the fantasy of the state**.**

At the end of the school year, however, as they imagined a future outside of this familiar arena, their investment in the promise of youth citizenship seemed less ambivalent. I interpreted Adia's cynical joke in the all-candidates meeting as a pointed remark on the instrumentalization of student leadership in the service of a set of politicized institutional aims. Likewise, Alicia's dismissal of the council as "not a big deal" suggests a shift in how she conceptualized the relationship between her own citizenship and the institutionalized version on offer through the school.

As the students grew up and out of school, they also grew out of youth citizenship. In other words, as they approached a world outside of public schooling, the dynamic that was maintained by their infantile citizenship faded. The infantile citizen sustains the mature citizen's fantasy of the state by allowing the mature citizen to be critical while at the same time, benefitting from the psychic security of the fantasy of the state (Berlant, 1997; Rose, 1996). Once relieved of this role, as Adia and Alicia were in the face of their upcoming graduation, the infantile citizen's identity as a political subject is renewed, open to the possibility of a political future that is not circumscribed by the youth/adult dynamic that frames life in the school. As each cohort of student leaders left the school, what remained, collecting the traces of cohort after cohort of young people's infantile citizenship, were policies, practices, and traditions. In the context of political life in schools, then, the fantasy of the state depends on a constant supply of infantile citizens.

And what happens next for the young citizen, newly released from the world of the school? Arendt (2006[1958]) argues that the school belongs to the private realm, and that young people are to be protected from the problems of the public world — problems that are not of their making — so that their newness, in which lies their capacity to renew the world — remains intact. While my research was limited to the world of the school, it revealed the porousness of these categories: public and private; the adults' world and the child's world. In focusing on the student council, I chose to study what is perhaps the *most* tradition-bound and institutionalized of the youth citizenship/leadership programs that are offered to young people. Traditionally, the student council is focused inward, toward the private concerns of the school, like dances and assemblies. However, the problems of the adult, public sphere: inequality, racism, homophobia, for instance, readily infiltrated the private realm of the child, disrupting the private equilibrium of infantile citizenship. In these moments, the versions of citizenship and youth leadership that the school supported seemed to falter and disappoint. My focus on school-based iterations of youth citizenship and leadership meant that I could study how these public issues worked their ways through and circumscribed by the school and by its institutionalized version of citizenship, its hierarchies, and its structures of authority. This is an important perspective for thinking about how youth citizenship and leadership is shaped by public institutions like schooling.

However, active youth citizenship work place outside the school as well – in the day-to-day activities of life as well on the public stage. A handful of students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas school have become the faces of gun control activism in the United States, and Greta Thunberg, a 15-year old from Sweden, has spearheaded widespread

student strikes across Europe to protest government inaction on climate change. These examples, and others, provide a point of departure for my research: what does youth citizenship work look like when it is severed from the affective dynamics of the school and its related institutions? In Thunberg's case, the disassociation is complete: her activism relies on a complete rejection of the school: she skipped classes for three weeks to protest the absence of radical climate policy-talk in the run-up to Sweden's parliamentary election in 2018 (Green, 2018). Since then, she has encouraged tens of thousands of school-children to stage school walkouts. Thunberg's protest raises an important question for the project of youth citizenship and leadership in and out of schools: how do the affective dynamics of youth and political life extend beyond the school? How to protests like school strikes and walkouts use a disavowal of schooling to disrupt the dynamic between the infantile citizen and the mature one? And how does the young activist — the political child — figure into an affective political landscape that is not bound by the dynamics of the school, but instead by a wider set of relations, discourses, and practices?

These questions allow me to circle back to the school. If it is the affective scene of the school — its structures of authority and its promises about the future — that produce student leaders' citizenship as infantile, then what can or should schools do about it? My dissertation does not propose new policies or new pedagogical approaches. Rather, it contains a call to scholars and practitioners interested in student leadership and youth citizenship to evaluate current approaches to youth citizenship and student leadership in terms of their own attachments to the promises of young people's political futures. Instead of rushing to develop new programmes for participation in policy-making and new avenues for student leadership, both scholars and practitioners might instead consider the affective

(and material) conditions that propel this urge to improve upon young people's citizenship work. When the affective underpinnings of the dynamic between the adult world and the young citizen become more visible, then perhaps young people's citizenship can be untethered from the adult world's fantasies and worries about the future, allowing them to be the citizens of today *and* of tomorrow.

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